# Stories from the Beyond

A Food Security Report From Tribal Orissa

an agragamee Silver Jubilee Publication

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## A Food Security Report From Tribal Orissa

Action Research by Agragamee

agragamee

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# CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

This insightful and evocative study of the condition of tribal communities in Southern Orissa raises disturbing questions about the country's economic policies and democratic institutions. It is, first of all, a grim reminder of the excruciating deprivations endured by marginalised sections of the population. As the report puts it, "for the poor tribal peasant, life is one long stretch of trouble and strife, beginning and often ending with food insecurity". This is not just because of the lack of assets, education or skills of the rural poor. It is also a reflection of the merciless exploitation they are exposed to: exploitation by the landlord, the contractor, the babu, and the "sahukar", among others.

Further, the report brings out the utter ineffectiveness of government intervention in protecting tribal communities from exploitation. For one thing, "government interventions in the tribal regions are conspicuous by their invisibility". For another, government officials often take active part in the exploitation of the rural poor. In this exploitative and unequal context, democratic institutions have achieved very little in terms of giving a voice to disadvantaged groups. A vicious circle of social inequality and political marginalisation has comprehensively undermined the prospects of equitable development. The failure of democratic institutions is evident, for instance, in the fate of the Gram Sabhas. As the authors note, "there is often a feeling that the Gram Sabha is only meant for the leaders and the people with high status in the village". Even the basic notion that all residents of a village have a right to participate in the Gram Sabha has not sunk in. In fact, "women were surprised when they were informed that they also had a right to participate in such meetings".

This report prompted me to reexamine some field notes I had written in April 1999, during a long walk through the "KBK" (Kalahandi-

Bolangir-Koraput) region. As it happens, the walk started in Kashipur, from the Agragamee campus where much of the research reported in this monograph was carried out. I do not presume to have gained a vast knowledge of the area during this brief journey, but some deep impressions remain. These impressions corroborate many of the observations presented in this report.

The breathtaking beauty of southern Orissa, and the brighter aspects of tribal life (so beautifully conveyed in Gopinath Mohanty's novel Paraja) did not leave any illusion about the harsh conditions of life in the area. I remember how one old man, barely half my height, kindly allowed me to have a go at carrying the load he was taking to the market. I collapsed under the weight. He had another 15 kilometres to go. For this excruciating labour he would earn twelve rupees or so, at a time when rice sold for ten rupees a kilo in the market.

Beyond this anecdote is a sea of hardship and deprivation. In village after village, poor people survived on a spartan diet (e.g. rice and salt), drank unsafe water, and had virtually no access to health care. Diarrhoea was a common cause of death. Real wages were incredibly low. Even on public works programmes, labourers earned as little as Rs 25 a day.

There were many signs of a crisis of traditional livelihoods, especially in areas that used to practice shifting cultivation. One elderly man sighed: "In the old days, even a single woman's work was enough to feed the family; now, even if the whole family works, we go hungry." Massive environmental degradation clearly contributed to this crisis. In many villages, the surrounding forests had been decimated and forest-based economic activities had virtually disappeared. In some areas, this had been compensated by the expansion of other occupations, such as weaving and the production of cash crops. Elsewhere, labour migration (often described as "going abroad", e.g. to Nagpur or Hyderabad) was the overwhelming survival strategy. Many villages were almost empty of adult men.

Another prime cause of economic backwardness in KBK is rampant exploitation and corruption. Local Adivasis and Dalits are sitting ducks for unscrupulous traders, moneylenders, contractors and bureaucrats.

Enormous sums have been poured into "development" programmes of all hues with no tangible result. In Bhawanipatna, one contractor (who turned out to be a fresh graduate from St Stephen's College in Delhi) gave me a candid account of the commissions that were "due" to various officials for any development work at the Gram Panchayat level: 3 per cent for the Block Development Officer (BDO), 5 per cent for the Junior Engineer, 5 per cent for the "Gram Panchayat extension officer", 5 per cent for the Block chairman, 2 per cent for the Block clerk, 2 per cent for the Block cashier (sic). When I asked him what happened if, say, the BDO were an honest person, he exclaimed, "if the BDO is honest, he will stick to his 3 per cent"!

Everywhere we went, the condition of local public services was abysmal. There were plenty of vacant posts in schools, health centres and administrative offices, as government employees strive to avoid being posted in this challenging area. Schooling facilities were woefully inadequate. I was startled, for instance, to find fairly large villages without a single primary school - something that would be unthinkable in most other states today. The silver lining was the mid-day meal programme: school-going children were getting a cooked lunch, instead of the usual monthly grain rations.

The public distribution system had familiar flaws. Most people had ration cards, and the official entitlements were far from negligible: 10 kilos of rice per month for BPL families, at Rs 2 per kilo. But delivery was inadequate and unpredictable. When food happened to reach the local ration shop, people had to rush there at short notice (a whole day's walk in some cases), and rice was distributed on a first-come-first-served basis, with the laggards getting nothing. In two villages where I examined people's ration cards, the average BPL family had received 40 kilos of rice over the preceding twelve months, instead of the official 120 kilos. In Orissa as elsewhere, government officials blame the people for the low offtake of grain under the public distribution system, but the real problem lies in defective supply arrangements, themselves related to pervasive corruption.

Behind these failures is an overarching problem of political marginalisation. As one woman saw it, "there is no point complaining - nobody is going to listen".

This is not just a research report but also a call for action, based on "social development and political literacy" as the authors put it. This strategy is more relevant than ever, with the recent enactment of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which presents new opportunities to organize rural workers and revive the labour movement in India. As the report brings out, the economic impoverishment and political marginalisation of tribal communities in southern Orissa cannot be solved through employment programmes alone. Larger issues of land ownership, control over resources, extra-economic exploitation and social exclusion also need to be addressed. Yet NREGA is a unique opportunity for rural workers to organise and to struggle not only for their entitlements under the Act but also for other economic and social rights. It is in that sense, and not just as an employment programme, that NREGA represents a new ray of hope for rural labourers in India today.

This study is a welcome contribution to our understanding of tribal life in southern Orissa as well as of these larger political issues. It has been prepared by courageous people who have worked in this difficult area for many years, often at considerable personal risk. I hope that this report will receive the attention it deserves, and serve as a springboard for further debate and action.

Jean Dreze
University of Allahabad
3 March 2007

# 1. CONTEXT

## Food Insecurity Overview

This study was taken up at a time when untimely deaths in different tribal regions of Orissa had caught the national headlines, and the Supreme Court gave its verdict on the PUCL petition on the starvation deaths in Rajasthan. The apex court directed the states to finalise lists of BPL families, and open all PDS Shops, which should start functioning within a week, and also called for reply affidavits of the states and Union Territories. In the hearings of the return Affidavits, Orissa was one of the states severely chastised for not having yet finalised the BPL list. The epidemic deaths beginning with Kashipur, and then also occurring in districts like Gajapati, Koraput caught the attention of the media, and were widely highlighted in the local as well as the national press. A stream of dignitaries, including the Chief Minister of Orissa, the Civil Supplies Minister, Shanta Kumar, made their way into the remote villages of the affected tribal Blocks as panic response set in. Cooked meal centres were set up, free rations were distributed, food for work projects were kicked into motion, and clarifications, excuses, denials, blames flew thick and fast. Is mango kernel, edible or not; was it starvation or not, did the people have food in their houses when they died, did they have bank balances, etc. questions circulated widely, and the various Ministers in power took to denying that there was any starvation deaths at all. Nearly a year later, when the situation repeated itself in Keonjhar, with the death of two children and a woman from two families, they were reported as snake bite fatalities. Later reports however brought out the fact that people had been coerced.

But polemics apart, as an organisation deeply concerned and working for tribal rights and livelihoods, these deaths affected us very much, as

we realised that despite our several efforts, there were pockets in the Block that were still sorely in need of attention. Epidemic deaths in the tribal regions is not a new phenomenon. In fact, we were shocked into rapid response in mid-1986, when there were reports of mass deaths in several of the villages in Kashipur Block. Not having much infrastructure or resources, we took recourse to informing the health officials, and going to the villages and dispensing re-hydration packets and other medication suggested to us by health personal. In those days, the health team was also much more deeply concerned. The Medical Officers. in the PHC personally accompanied us with their team and equipment to the most interior of the villages, and administered necessary treatment. Most of the travel was on foot, and the working hours stretched deep into the night. The doctors became irritated and harassed by people's inexplicable refusal to remove the more critical patients to the Health centres, but work went on nevertheless. Needless to say, many lives were saved by timely intervention. Food supplies were rushed to the villages, and even in those days there were instance of misappropriation, but, the scale was rather smaller. The next year, there were reports of deaths again. This time, experience helped us prepare better the distress conditions in the villages. We took up informal studies, and tried to find out what had happened. As of now, even then, deaths immediately brought panic response from the administration and people's responses were almost always defensive and guarded, revealing little. But, we did find some common points. In several of the villages where people had died within two to three days' time, drinking water was an acute problem, with usual sources getting flooded and contaminated during the monsoons. There was also little hygiene in the villages, and the damp conditions in the monsoons created a ripe ground for the spread of infection. Food was extremely scarce for the entire village, and people were almost ready to eat anything they could lay their hands on. In one or two of the villages, we also came to know that people had died after consuming meat from dead. cattle. Mango kernels were being consumed, but deaths could really not be attributed to them, as the entire village depended substantially on mango kernels for food, but it was only some who had died.

Further discussions at less stressful times also helped us know that epidemic deaths due to cholera were frequent during the monsoons in the past. People told us that in those days, almost entire villages migrated because they could find no other way of countering the epidemic deaths. In several instance more than half the village had been wiped out.

Of course, the state had its own response. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited the area, and had a completely stage-managed tour of the region. He declared the region was not drought affected. But eventually, a programme of development with funds from IFAD was sanctioned specially for Kashipur Block. On our side, we took to mobilising our workers, and animators in the villages to be extra vigilant, and immediately report any sickness and disease to the health centres in writing. With UNICEF support, we also took up a programme of food security, and helped the community develop the institution of community grain banks, with matching grain contribution with rations supplies by UNICEF. The programme did have its impact, and people soon realised that this was something that could help them avoid the hapless grovelling at the moneylenders feet during the monsoon months. Gradually, people developed community managed systems of grain banks, and with close monitoring, things began to improve. All government and funded programmes, however had their time period, and in 6 years' time the UNICEF programme drew to a close. With much less support now, we had to cut down on the monitoring of the grain banks. In several villages across the two Blocks we had taken up for the programmes, however people sustained grain banks. But in some of the villages, counter campaigns by money-lenders, apathy and default caused the grain banks to fail. When the reports of deaths came in August and September 2001, we found that in these villages, the grain banks had stopped functioning for the last three to four years.

But grain banks is not a pat solution to the problem. There were also genuine reasons why people could not sustain grain banks. There were villages where there had been extensive crop-failure. In these villages, the grain banks gradually collapsed as people just did not have the capacity to repay. There were other villages, in which people really did

not have any land. They mostly depended on share-cropping land of the non-tribal landlord, bonded labour, or highly underpaid wage labour. It was in this context, that a meeting of concerned individuals and organisations was held, and it was felt that one of the first essential steps necessary was to take up several micro-studies in the tribal regions to assess the situation of food security or rather food insecurity so as to be able to take up informed policy advocacy measures.

## The Tribal Situation

The tribal districts of Southern and Western Orissa, India have been recognised for their backwardness and poor human development indicators for long. These regions, present a complex picture of underdevelopment, combining resource degradation with socio-economic exploitation, a weak political presence of the majority communities and poor infrastructural facilities. There is an alarming decrease in the forest cover due to commercial exploitation.

Over the last five years, just the districts of Malkangiri and Koraput together have lost more than 150 Sq.km of forest cover. The indigenous tribal communities are seen as the main culprits in the deforestation of the region, and the destruction of the resource base. Nobody looks however at the large dams that have inundated hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest and agricultural land, and destroyed sustainable livelihoods, the industries that apart from grabbing thousands of hectares of land are destroying further areas in their insatiable hunt for natural resources.

Displacement has been the fate of almost a 6th of the population of the undivided Koraput, according to conservative estimates. Here, hydro power dams, industries, and mines have forced tribal communities into further impoverishment, and destroyed their socio-cultural fabric. There is no lack of recognition of the issues of displacement in the Government as well as in academic circles. Several studies by various institutions and departments to assess the problems of displacement have been taken up, and reports produced on the problems displaced communities face. Leading among them is the World Bank, whose loans have perhaps

engendered the maximum displacement in the state and the country. Apart from studies, the tangible suffering of communities is there for all to see. Even several officers and bureaucrats have commented on the sufferings of the displaced, and produced entire books on the issue. Training programmes initiated by the World Bank and other funding agencies have produced volumes on R& R. There are no clear statistics on the extent of displacement in the country and the state. Even worse is the status of information on resettlement. Studies indicate that less than 30% of the displaced have been resettled. As one can see, even more than the picture of displacement, what is horrifying is the estimate of the backlog of the people who are yet to be settled, which include projects which started in the late 1940s.

Studies on displacement indicate a dismal picture of resettlement and rehabilitation. In fact, there is little concrete data on the number of people displaced or rehabilitated. This is even truer of the projects taken up in the undivided Koraput districts, and if one tries to probe the number of people or families resettled and rehabilitated, then one is even more confounded. When the first major irrigation projects were taken post independence, the state did not have a policy of resettlement and rehabilitation. This was the case with the first major irrigation projects like the Machkund hydel project on river Duduma, completed in 1960, the Hirakhud river valley project completed in 1957, the Balimela dam project, completed in 1977. It was only with the Rengali Multi-pupose irrigation project in 1973 that an R&R policy was articulated, and any kind of system introduced in the displacement of local communities in the state.

## Government Presence & Delivery

The Government, so eager for modernisation and infrastructure development seems to be strangely reluctant to engender any kind of development that will improve the living standards of the local communities. Despite the outcry on right to food the BPL lists are yet to be finalised at the time of writing this chapter. On the other hand, a multiplicity of welfare programmes have created much confusion, and

room for more misappropriation. Similarly, instead of ensuring that the Government Primary Schools function, and are provided with adequate facilities as well as teaching staff, half-baked programmes like the EGS have been started with the result that inefficiency and apathy render almost all schools defunct and tribal children do not have access to even primary education, even after the Right to Eelementary Education Act. There is talk of punishing errant parents, but nobody looks at the errant Ministers who provide appointment and transfers on bribe. They should be the ones punished first.

Programmes of economic development and employment incur huge amounts of expenditure. In just the Mohana Block, we found that more than two crores had been spent on employment programmes in one financial year. There was hardly any impact of it on the ground.

All this is further exacerbated by the apathy of the Government departments, where inefficiency and indifference have become the norm. The really poor find it very difficult to benefit in any long-term manner from either welfare or development. In fact, a significant portion of the most marginalized communities, do not even find a place in the Below poverty line lists, whereas a substantial portion of the non-tribal communities in these regions make sure that they are listed and entitled to the benefits meant for those less fortunate. An official report, of the KBK (Kalahandi, Bolangir, Koraput) regions states that problems of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput are rooted in poverty, where 90% of the families are below poverty line. The people here depend largely on agriculture, with 80% of the population living in rural areas, and depending on agriculture alone for a living. In such a situation, with 88% of the land un-irrigated, even small variations in rainfall can create acute distress in the population. The rice production for this region is 900 kgs per hectare, as against the state average of 1430 kgs. This has lead to large-scale distress migrations in the area .

All this is despite the various and multifarious schemes that have been sanctioned to these regions by the Government. These schemes including the ADAPT, taken up in 15 Blocks in Kalhandi and Koraput Duistricts, the IFAD supported OTDP taken up specially for the

Kashipur Block, the centrally sponsored Integrated Watershed Development Programme, the DPEP for education, and the Long term Action Plan for the KBK districts, have involved several hundred crores of expenditure, but have had little impact in improving the human development indicators in the region. The majority tribal community continue to be as poor or even poorer than before, as market forces, and the policies of globalisation and liberalisation impose subsidy cuts on crucial sectors like health and essential commodities on an already impoverished community.

## Impoverishment & Exploitation

Climatically, the region is subject to wide yearly temperature variations, and high but erratic rainfall (Koraput 1522 mm, Kalahandi 1589 mm and Bolangir 1443 mm annual rainfall), with uneven distribution. The major portion of the region is hilly upland. This combination has lead to an ecologically fragility, with human interventions for commercial exploitation causing severe imbalances and environmental stress. The region has thus been subject to frequent droughts and floods, with all the socio-cultural expressions of distress including mass migrations, sale of children, and even deaths manifesting themselves periodically. This has however not always been the case. Historically, the tribal communities of Koraput have been known for their self-sufficiency, the districts of Kalahandi, and Koraput together, for their quality and diversity of rice as well as other millets, as also for their forest resources, yielding some of the best quality timber.

Systematic exploitation at various levels, private contractors, middlemen, as well as private corporations has lead to a situation, where the indigenous tribal communities in these districts have been dispossessed and alienated, and rendered slaves in their own homeland. Much if not all of this has taken place in collusion with the state machinery. Ecological degradation has gone hand in hand with the increasing impoverisation of the local communities. However, the state turning the proverbial blind eye to real facts has decided that the only development course left for these regions is to open it up to private enterprise on a scale

larger than ever before. This is also in tune with the mainstream interests in the region because of its rich resource base, including water, minerals, forests and land. Thus, over the last two decades there has been an increasing onslaught on the resource base in the region for the construction of large dams, for setting up industries, for mineral exploitation, and other activities. This has lead to large-scale displacement of tribal communities, causing much distress and disruption, as also untold tensions within communities which had never had a history of violence or aggression as the population pressure is pushed up artificially, and the carrying capacity of an already overstressed land is pushed closer to its limits.

All this has lead to increasing impoverishment, which has resulted in the self-sufficiency of the tribal communities being turned into want and poverty, resulting more than anything else in periods of acute distress with malnutrition and even deaths being a common occurrence during these deaths. The recent media publicity given to the hunger deaths in Kashipur and the neighbouring regions highlight but the yearly cycle of hunger and deprivation that the tribal communities have been going through, and serve as a timely reminder that despite the multiplicity of development interventions and schemes, there is still much amiss in these areas, and  deeper, and more concerted study is required to understand the problems, and find viable alternatives.

There have been involved and long debates whether things like mango kernels are edible or not, and whether people have died of starvation, or of some other reason. To us who have been bending over backwards trying to put into place policies and processes that would ensure a measure of self-reliance, and sustainable development, this is not the issue. Because even if we do succeed in solving the riddle of the edibility of mango kernels, we shall not have solved the riddle of the continuing underdevelopment of the tribal regions. Even if we are able to debate and decide once and for all whether the deaths in Kashipur and the adjoining tribal areas were because of hunger, malnutrition or sheer masochistic suicide, we shall not solve the problems of want and inhuman poverty that stalks these regions. To our perceptions, these are coffee table debates, simplistic and escapist, that allow us to fiddle while the

poor starve. This year, the threat of drought has been just marginally removed. Yet, there is distress in several districts. In Gajapati, people have already migrated in thousands after this years crop failure. In districts like Bolangir, the exodus to the brick kilns of Raipur continues, and nobody has a count how many people are going, and how many people remain, and what is their condition. The government had nearly a year of warning after last year's outcry to put into place systems that would ensure effective food for work programmes, so that the hapless poor would not be forced into distress migrations. Yet, there has been hardly any stirring on the part of the Government, and the yearly routine with its dreary suffering has begun for thousands if not lakhs of people in the state. All this should make us pause and question what really ails our state. Orissa has no paucity of natural resources. It has water, forests, a long coast line, and good land. Even the worst affected districts today, including Koraput, and Kalahandi have been known to earn maximum revenue through paddy cultivation. In fact these two districts produced the rice qualities as well as quantities. But, the situation has completely changed now. Along with the drought, there is enormous unrest in the tribal regions. We cannot like an ostrich just bury our heads and hope the problem will go away. Yes food for work, and other mitigation measures will need to be put into place, but, we need to really look beyond that. We need to look at tribal and people's lives and livelihoods, we need to look at ourselves, we need to ask ourselves some very fundamental questions and make genuine attempts to provide the answers.

This study was taken up to try and look at what is happening in tribal villages, and to understand the stress and strain in the lives of people who live in tribal regions and the compulsions they face, which keep them from taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure future. Much is already said and written about tribal lives, and we do not presume to make any new discoveries. We hope however, that by having the people of the tribal regions themselves inform the study, we can help in engendering information that might have greater relevance, and eventually help to find alternatives that would be more meaningful, than those being tried out today. We hope that our perceptions

developed through long years of work in the tribal regions would help us initiate a meaningful dialogue at different levels through this study, and so bring all concerned together to find workable solutions.

# 2. UPDATE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

## Introduction

This Study taken up four years back in 2001 has been an effort to quantify and document many of our perceptions about the situation of life and livelihoods of the tribal communities of Orissa for analysis and policy review. Voluntary organisations are often taken up by the pressures of the field, and find little time to document their findings, and quantify their observations for the benefit of the planners. This trivialises many of the realities expressed by voluntary organisations and hides the realities of the poor behind a layer of doubt, and indifference. Tribal regions in Orissa are underdeveloped and neglected, and tribal communities, as also the many other communities of scheduled castes, backward castes, etc live in a perpetual state of insecurity of several kinds, including food, tenure, employment and income. This is perhaps the state of all tribal regions, and the fate of all tribal communities in this country. Agragamee's efforts in the tribal regions have served the crucial purpose of bringing to centre stage several problems and deprivations of the tribal communities. Yet, much more needs to be done, to get the state to be really accountable to its tribal communities who form nearly a fourth of the population of the state. On the other hand, development of the tribal regions in Orissa is not an impossible task, as there is potential and scope. It calls however for a genuine political will and the ability to make real effort to evolve people's plans, and take them forward. Tribal people and the poor in general, have immense resources and resilience within themselves, which has enabled them to survive under some of the most difficult and trying circumstances, they also have a rich knowledge system born out of centuries of experience and effort, which has helped nurture a diverse and rich ecosystem.

Present day development priorities however have very consciously turned away from the needs and concerns of local communities and prioritised private and foreign investment, for industrial and infrastructure development. In an agricultural state like Orissa, with an abundance of natural resources, such an approach, combined with no concern for any kind of environmental checks and balances has already spelt out a recipe for disaster. Yet, the state hides behind the excuse that the efforts for rural and tribal regions have not resulted in any tangible development of the tribal regions, and so this is the only alternative. The rhetoric of development and foreign investment is now backed by a Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy notified by the Government of Orissa, which promises to recognise the voice of the people. On the ground, this takes the form of placing armed police force wherever such voices do try to make themselves heard. In the years that have passed since this study was taken up, the turmoil in the tribal regions has only increased. Violence against and repression of tribal people is epitomised not just by the Kalinganagar incident, but by the whole pattern of responses of the administration in different districts to the situation of local communities as they struggle at the margins of survival. Thus, even as distress migration of people in the KBK districts increases and the numbers go upto lakhs in any one season at a conservative estimate, the government is too apathetic to put into place effective programmes of employment generation; even as sponge iron plants in Keonjhar pollute water sources, the government arrests women protesting against such defilement; progressive legislations like the Provisions of the Panchayats (extension to the Scheduled Areas Act) are misused by District Collectors to organise mock Gram Sabhas to sanctify destructive mining and industrial activities, as people protest, women, men, and even children are arrested and put behind bars in districts like Rayagada and Kalahandi, to make way for the Sterlite and Utkal Alumina International Ltd.

The Government is bent on opening up the state for investment in mines, industries and commercial agriculture and forestry. Special Economic Zones are being proposed and promoted, giving no thought to the needs of the people living in these zones. In so doing, not only are the livelihoods of local communities affected adversely, but entire eco-systems are destroyed, with major and complex river systems affected. Several groups have demonstrated the false premises on which environmental clearances are given to corporates, and the shoddy

methods adopted by them to influence authorities in Orissa. A break down of the constitution and the law is countenanced by the government itself as Orissa tops the list of states getting foreign direct investment. The government continues to promote corporate sector interests despite protests and resistance almost all over the state. What are the people saying, why if corporatisation is the way to develop the state, don't people want it? The reason is perhaps quite simple: people do not want the impoverishment and marginalisation that follows the establishment of an industrial or mining unit in any area. And yet, the government chooses to ignore this simple cry of its people, and points fingers at political parties, NGOs; etc. for causing the trouble. The stories of badly implemented rehabilitation schemes have become the sad history of the tribal and rural people almost all over the country. Yet, the state persists.

This study underlines the meagre presence of a constructive government in the tribal areas, and more than anything else makes out a case for an act like the NREGA. However, the NREGA will solve little, unless the government seeks to implement it in earnest, trying to build on the resources of the local communities, and the rich natural resources of the state, rather than inviting investment for extractive industries, which destroy far more than they create. At the time of writing, the implementation of the NREGA is far from what it should be. Seven months into the scheme, few villages have received the job card. There is little understanding even amongst the Sarpanches and the Secretaries of the rules that govern the Act. The people know even less, and the voluntary nature of the Act, which is its primary strength, allowing the people to register, empowering them to demand and avail of employment, providing for cards to each family so that they know how much they are entitled to is completely lost, as the Act is treated like all other constitutional provisions: just so many more leaves to an irrelevant and obsolete document.

## Socio-economic Development

Nearly 85% of Orissa's population lives in the rural areas and depend mostly on agriculture for their livelihood. It also has a relatively large percentage of population classified as Scheduled Tribes. The total scheduled tribe population of the state is 81.45 lakhs, according to the 2001 census, forming about 22.1% of the total population of the state. The decennial growth rate of the tribal population is 15.8% as against

the state average of 16.25%, and national average of 23.86%. The State has abundant mineral resources including precious and semiprecious stones. It has also plentiful water resources. According to the estimate of the Central Ground Water Board, the total ground water resources in Orissa was 21,01,128 hectaremeter in 2001 of which only 14.79 percent has been harnessed till 2001. According to the Economic Survey of Orissa, 2004-05, of the total cultivable land of the state, only 26.96 lakh hectares have been provided with irrigation facilities, which constitutes 46% of the estimated irrigable land. Several major river systems in the state have been damed to provide for irrigation and power in the state. Orissa is now surplus in power, and exports it to other states. The private as also the public sector have also established several mines and industries in the state, with the TATAs having several units in Nothern Districts, and public sector units like the NALCO establishing in the southern districts of the state.

## Service Delivery

Despite the abundance of resources, Orissa is one of the most poverty stricken states in the country. There is a very poor efficiency of service delivery in almost all the welfare sectors, and one of the major causes of the state's descent into poverty, and backwardness can be assessed as the indifference of the Government to the provision of basic services for its people. The opening lines of the Health and Family welfare Chapter of the Orissa economic survey begins with the statement; 'A welfare state is under obligation to provide cheap and efficient health services to its people.' This obligation is scarce fulfilled. The medical and health care facilities have gone up from 365 medical institutions and 3112 hospital beds and a doctor- population ratio of 1:13500 in 1951 to 1701 medical institutions and 13886 hospital beds and a doctor population ratio of 1:27560, which indicates almost a doubling of the health service to population ratio. However, access to health services continues to be dismal, with people more often than not taking recourse to private health care wherever they can afford it. On the other hand, studies indicate that medical services are so dismal for the poorer and more remote communities, that despite spending thousands of rupees, they do not get proper treatment.

The picture of education, and especially primary education is also not promising. Orissa claims more than 80% coverage of its habitations by primary school facilities. There are 8000 to 11000 habitations still

without primary schools. Even the high percentage of coverage in reality hides the fact that majority of the schools are single or at most two teacher schools, making it almost impossible for any effective achievement in learning levels. In addition, the state appears to be withdrawing from its responsibility of providing primary and upper primary schools, and has instead taken to opening 'alternate' schools with part time contractual teachers posted in them. Nobody asks why the government itself would sanction 'alternate' schools. How can a state provide an alternate to its own institutions, is this alternate, or a substitute for quality. The worst catered to have in fact the 'alternate' schools with one part time teacher for three and even five classes. When the teacher to class ratio is so poor, one cannot even begin to talk about the teacher to student ratio in government primary schools. 'The Human Development Report 2004' for Orissa correctly points out that "These alternate provisions are invariably small single-teacher schools with very little academic infrastructure........... the teachers' monthly emoluments are lower than the minimum wage officially prescribed for skilled workers. It is the children of the poor who are enrolled in such alternative schools. Fairness demands that the poor have access to equally endowed schools as the not-so-poor.........."

## Employment

According to the Economic Survey Of Orissa 2004-2005 Report, because of the increase in population and consequent addition to the labour force, supply of labour continues to outstrip demand resulting in accentuation of the problems of unemployment and under-employment. The occupational classification as per 2001 Census shows that the total workers in the State account for 38.89% of the total population of the State. Special schemes, such as the special SGSY have been launched by the Government since 1999, to reduce unemployment in the unorganised sector, with the specific objective of helping families cross the poverty line. However, in Orissa, there are all indications from BPL survey that the percentage of below poverty line families, specially in the tribal area is far above the presently recognised figure of 47%. Since, 2001, a centrally sponsored scheme for increasing employment avenues for the unskilled labourers in the rural areas have been taken up with the main objective of providing additional wage employment, and creating durable community assets and developing community infrastructure. Orissa Government reports indicate that in

2003-04, 625.02 lakh man days of employment were created with an investment of Rs.229.47crores. These schemes have not done much to check distress migration, and there is much need for increasing delivery under programmes under the NREGA to mitigate the conditions of want and hunger in the KBK districts.

## Agriculture

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry sector continue to be the mainstay of the State's economy with a contribution of about 22.09% to NSDP during 2002-03 at 1993-94 prices. "Taking into account the predominant position of this sector and the large percentage of people dependent on this sector", the State government has pronounced State Agriculture Policy 1996 with the main objectives of doubling the production of food grains and oilseeds by the end of the Ninth Plan and to adopt agriculture as the main route for eradication of poverty. The Agricultural Policy 1996 is designed to bring about all-round development of the agricultural sector. Agriculture has been accorded the status of industry under the new Agriculture Policy with a view to encouraging private sector investment".

According to Agriculture Census conducted by the Board of Revenue, there were 39.66 lakh operational holdings in Orissa in 1995-96 of which small and marginal holdings accounted for 81.97% while the remaining 18.03% came under the category of semi-medium, medium and large holdings. As much as 50.27% of the total operated area was owned by small and marginal farmers and the remaining 49.73% by the semi-medium, medium and large farmers.

Production of foodgrains has fluctuated over the years. Foodgrains production was 57.88 lakh MT and 56.02 lakh MT during 1998-99 and 1999-00 respectively. The low production of foodgrains during 1999-00 was on account of the devastation caused by the Super Cyclone that hit the 14 fertile coastal districts of the State in Oct'99. During 2000-01, the foodgrains production declined further to a low of 49.75 lakh MT as the State experienced a drought situation. During 2001-02, there was a record production of foodgrains of 75.40 lakh MT as a result of bumper production of rice. But during 2002-03, the foodgrain production declined to a very low level of 35.55 lakh MT on account of severe drought in the State during Kharif-2002. Not withstanding the natural calamities the contribution of Orissa to the foodgrains basket

of the country, which was 2.4% in 1996-97, increased to 3.6% in 2001-02. Paddy was the major cereal crop in the State with coverage of about 77.7% of the total gross cropped area under principal crop in 2001-02 followed by pulses (10.9%) and oilseeds (4.9%). However, in terms of per acre yeild, Orissa is one of the lowest producing states, with only four out of its thirty districts having an average yeild of more than 1.5tph, as compared to an all India average of 208 districts out of 414 having average yeild of more than 1.5tph. Rice productivity has also shown fluctuating and largely negative trends over the last decade, indicating that there is a huge potential for improvement, given the fact that a major portion of the farming community cultivate paddy. The growth in paddy production performance has not matched the increase in irrigation potential, which has increased by over a lakh hectares over the last five years.

## Forests

According to the State Forest Report 2003, out of the recorded forest area of 58136sq.km., only 288sq.km. is under very dense forest cover, 27882sq.km is under moderately dense forest cover. Thus, less than 50% of the forest area has even a moderately dense forest cover. While the State had a total forest area of 59,963 sq km in the year 1981, in the year 2001-02 it declined to 58,135 sp km, which constitutes 37.3% of the total geographical area of the State. Therefore, the main thrust in the forestry sector is on afforestation of waste lands and rejuvenation of degraded forests. Besides, conservation of forests is being ensured by intensifying protective measures and enlisting people's involvement in checking illegal felling and removal of trees. The revenue receipts from forest produce which was Rs.85.00 crores during 2004-05, were almost a two-fold increase over the revenue receipts of the previous year, which was Rs.49.81 crores, but were in reality a decline over the preceding two years of Rs.96.92 crore during 2002-03 and Rs.87.81 crore in 2001-02.

The decline in forest revenue supports the increasing loss of forest cover. The reasons for these as outlined in the Orissa Development Report, 2002, are diversion of vast amounts of forest area; 25249.2ha for non-forest purposes including irrigation, mining, industries, railways, defence, etc.; low priority to the forestry sector development in the State budget, compared to agriculture, and allied sectors, and faulty, inadequate and obsolete forest laws, regulations, absence of people

friendly forest policies, and welfare strategies, oppressive forest legislations and acts amongst others. There has also been in recent time proven flouting of laws for the diversion of forest land to industries and mines.

## Poverty Alleviation

As per the latest estimate of Planning Commission available for the State, the percentage of population below the poverty line was 48.01 in rural areas and 42.83 in urban areas in 1999-00. This gives the State the dubious distinction of being the poorest State in the country. Seeking to address the problems of poverty the state government has taken up several programmes of self-employment and wage-employment to create income-generating assets and employment on daily wage basis for identified beneficiaries of target groups so as to enable them to cross the poverty line. The Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana(SGSY) is the main Centrally Sponsored self-employment programme implemented in the State since 1st April 1999. During 2004-05, 65712 beneficiaries have been assisted with income generating assets under SGSY with investment of Rs.156.91 crore. Another Centrally Sponsored scheme called 'Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) has been launched on September 2001, by merging two wage-employment generating schemes namely JSGY and EAS. The main objective of the scheme is to provide additional wage-employment in rural areas, ensure food security, create durable community assets and develop rural infrastructure. During 2004-05, about 553.94 lakh mandays of employment have been generated under SGRY scheme. State Govt. is also implementing the Employment Guarantee Act from 2006-07.

A poverty task force headed by the the Development Commissioner has been constituted to devise an actionable poverty reduction strategy. PTF recommends that vigorous efforts need be made to reduce poverty by at least 7% at a simple rate of 1.4% per year during Tenth Plan period. A further reduction in poverty by about 10% may be attempted in eleventh Plan Period (up to 2012) and further efforts should aim at 6% reduction of poverty during the next three years. The viability of the strategies recommended may be questioned in the face of the rampant irregularities in the implementation of the different schemes, including the OREGS, and in the face of reports which indicate that a staggering 99% of the tribal families in the state face some form of acute food deprivation.

## Development of Women

Several welfare programmes are being implemented in the State for development of women which include setting up of women's training centers, provision of short stay homes, rehabilitative services for women in distress, provision of old age pension etc. The female literacy rate in the State has increased from 4.5% in 1951 to 50.5% in 2001. The proportion of women among total employees in the organized sector has increased from 12.41% in 2000 to 14.31% in 2004. To increase the number of women in public services, one third of the vacancies in the State Government Departments in Group B, Group c and Group D services / posts required to be filled up through direct recruitment, have been reserved for women. Under State Old Age Pension Scheme (SOAP) 3.43 lakh (51%) women beneficiaries were covered during 2004-05. Similarly under National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAP), 2.51 lakh (51.0%) women were benefited during the said period. During 2004-05, around 60,000(i.e. about 85%) women were benefited under SGSY. Under SGRY, 553.94 lakh labour days of employment were generated, out of which 181.65 lakh labour days were created by women. To increase the number of women in the public sector, it has been decided by the Government that all posts of Anganwadi workers, Supervisors and CDPOs will be filled by women.

The status of women in the state is however quite dismal, and the situation is specially acute in the tribal regions, where undernutrition, and poor educational and literacy levels compel women to back-breaking unskilled work. Despite the several economic and employment programmes for women, as much as 74% of the female workforce are in the unorganised sector. The percentage of women in the public sector has increased marginally from 13.4% of the total employees in 2002 to 13.8% on 2003. However, in the private sector the number of women has declined in absolute terms as well as in overall percentage.

## Welfare of Scheduled Castes And Scheduled Tribes

One of the major concerns of the State has been to accelerate the all-round development of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes that together constitute 38.6% (STs 22.1% and SCs 16.5%) of the total population of the State as per the 2001 Census. For historical reasons, this segment of the society has remained socially and economically backward. Therefore, concerted efforts have been made under different

plans to bring them into the mainstream of development. The State Government is committed to the development of these communities. Accordingly, various special programmes and welfare measures have been launched for their benefit which includes legal aid, rehabilitation of victimised STs and SCs, housing facilities, establishment of special employment exchanges, reservation in employment etc.

The Tribal Sub-Plan approach was adopted in the Fifth Plan and the Special Component Plan for SCs in the Sixth Plan. At present, 21 ITDAS are functioning in 12 districts covering 118 blocks as nodal agencies for operationalisation of the TSP. During 2004 -05 an amount of Rs.51.77crores has been sanctioned under the scheme of which Rs.49.60 was spent for 30246 Scheduled tribe beneficiaries. An allocation of Rs.47.26 crores has been made for the year 2005 – 06 with a target to cover 60000 beneficiaries. Apart from this, the Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Programee (OTELP), with a total outlay of Rs.430 crores, jointly funded by the IFAD-DFID-WFP and including a loan component from IFAD of Rs.95.00crores has been taken up for the empowerment of tribals by providing them livelihood support and food security through the watershed approach. The programme is proposed to be implemented in 30 backward tribal blocks in seven districts, including Kandhmal, Kalahandi, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput and Nawrangpur over a period of 10 years. Allocations from out of plan budgets of the State are being earmarked for the Tribal Sub-plan and Special Component Plan commensurate to the proportion of ST and SC population to the total population.

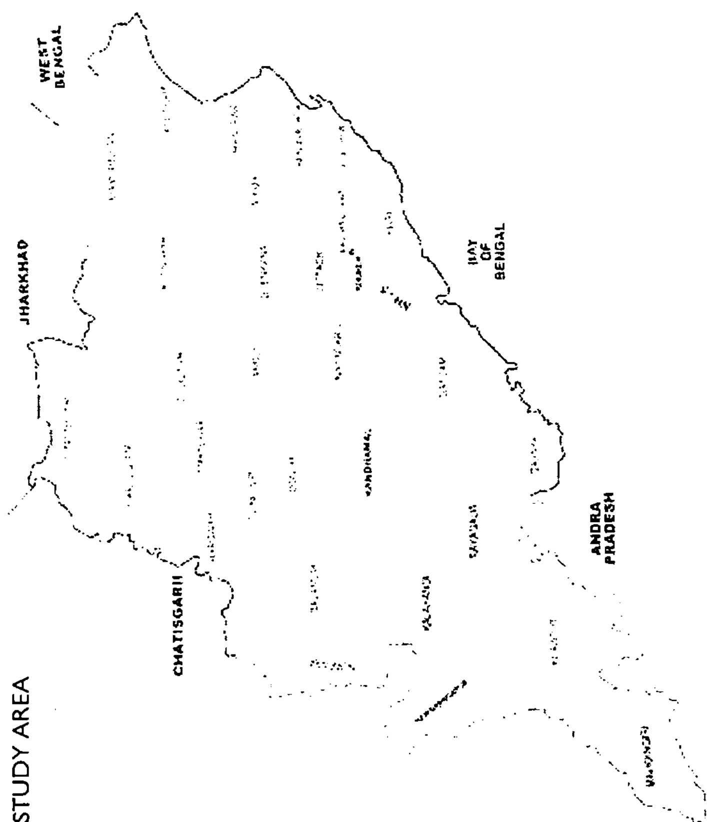
Grants under the first proviso to Article 275(1) of the constitution for filling up critical gaps in economic and social infrastructure, which cannot be funded under any other scheme have been provided by the Government of India to the extent of Rs.122.34crores since 2000-01. The TDCCOL (Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation Of Orissa Ltd.) which has been functioning since 1967 is proposed to be reviewed and re-structured. A sum of Rs.4.00crores has been proposed under the Central Plan for share capital investment and an amount of Rs.15.00lakhs has been provided under the State Plan towards managerial subsidy to TDCC during 2004-05.

**Externally Aided Projects**

The State avails external assistance in the form of Additional Central Assistance (ACA) for implementation of Externally Aided Projects (EAPs)

in the State. External agencies such as World Bank, DFID, International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Food Programme and agencies of different countries such as Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, U.K., Japan etc. have extended financial assistance in selected areas for economic development.

Twenty Externally Aided Project (EAPs) including ten pipeline projects covering different sectors like Agriculture, Education, Health, Works, Energy, Irrigation, Housing & Urban Development and Welfare of SC & ST are intended to be implemented during Annual Plan 2003-04. Out of the 10 ongoing EAPs, one is being implemented exclusively in the KBK districts, six are in non-KBK districts and the remaining three are spread in both KBK and non-KBK districts. Ten Pipeline Projects are at different stages of finalisation and were expected to be implemented in 2003-04. Of these ten pipeline projects, five projects will be implemented in the non-KBK districts. The remaining projects will have presence all over the State including the KBK districts. The Ninth Plan envisaged an outlay of Rs. 4,344.34 crore out of the total State Plan outlay of Rs. 15,000.00 crore which comes to 29% of the total State Plan outlay. The Tenth Plan envisages an outlay of Rs. 6,181.10 crore out of the total State Plan outlay for implementation of the ongoing as well as pipeline EAP projects. The Annual Plan 2003-04 envisages an outlay of Rs.1, 082.60 crore (Rs.699.76 crore for the ongoing EAPs and Rs.382.84 crore for proposed new EAPs), out of the total State Plan outlay of Rs. 3,400.00 crore. This includes ACA to the extent of Rs.1, 053.00 crore and the State's share of Rs.29.60 crore.




**ORISSA MAP**, SHOWING STUDY AREA

# 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study was participatory, drawing its information as well as core perceptions from the tribal community while probing the role of the different players and stake holders. We have thus sought information, suggestions and advice from government officials, political leaders V.O. functionaries and have stayed in the villages listening to the voice of the people. We could have gone for a broad based study that would have given us statistically more valid information on different parameters that affect a village situation. We could also have taken recourse to records and reports from the Blocks and districts, and undertaken an analysis of these to get a picture of what the Government is doing. However, at this point of time, following the preliminary discussions which lead up to the study, we felt it was more important to take up a micro-study with participatory methods and approaches to get a picture into the situation of the village. Taking into consideration limitations of time and resources, we felt we should focus the study on the more backward areas, and thus try and go straight to the root of the problem. The Government of Orissa Report, titled : "Report of the Committee on the Constitution of Separate Development Board in Orissa" gave us a good referral point. Needless to say, the study has been confined to the tribal regions because the situation that gave rise to the present study was more or less confined to the tribal regions. We thus took up the study in four phases as follows:

## a. Identification of Study Area

6 tribal Blocks were identified for the study, from the Southern Districts of Orissa, based on the recent reports of deaths, as also on the backwardness ranking of the Government of Orissa Report, titled : "Report of the Committee on the Constitution of Separate Development Board in Orissa". A perusal of the report showed that of the 6 most backward blocks 4 were in Gajapati. Eventually taking into consideration reasons of parity, 3 blocks were selected from Gajapati, and others, one each from the districts of Rayagada, Kalahandi, and Malkangiri. The final selection was as follows

| Sl. | Districts | Blocks | Rank | Panchayats/ Villages |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Gajapati | Rayagada | 1 | S.Koradasing/ Ayada Karansahi, Lailai /Tilli |
| 2. | Gajapati | Gumma | 2 | Tarangada/ Tamosingh, Namangada/ Barba |
| 3. | Kalahandi | Thuamulrampur | 3 | Yubarajpur / Kanarpas, Mohulpatna / Tikilipadar |
| 4. | Gajapati | Mohana | 4 | Domadua / Kollaba, Jirango/ Rankuda |
| 5. | Malkangiri | Kudumulgumma | 5 | Somanathpur/ Ranginiguda, Badapadara/ Metaguda |
| 6. | Rayagada | Kasipur | 7 | Godibali/ Pushghati, Manusgaon / Kukudagada |

A round of preliminary visits and consultations was taken up to identify the villages for micro study. The local volunary organisation(VO) in the blocks were consulted and also requested for support to help establish rapport. Consultations were also held with local elected representatives. All this helped to finalize the criteria as also the villages. The selection criteria finalized were as follows:

- Two villages selected in the block should be situated differently, one could be well connected, while the other more remote, one of the villages could have interventions of the local VO, while the other selected village should be relatively free of VO interventions;
- The entire village and not just a hamlet of a village should be selected for study;
- The size of the village should not be more than 100 households. This was for reasons of convenience, as too large a village would take up too much time, and also have more potentially conflict situations, which would have to be addressed to carry out effective survey and research.

- The villages should be geographically representative and not from the same or adjoining villages.

**b. Orientation Programs**

An orientation program of team members of the different groups was organized the training was taken up as follows:

- Sharing and developing knowledge and skills for participatory research. Detailed discussions regarding participatory techniques, relative merits of different techniques, the importance as well as limitations of symbolic representations, as also the need for going beyong these techniques to get realistic information were taken up. Based on these discussions, formats were developed for the different exercises.
- The second part of the training was on mapping land forest and water resources in the villages. Most of the team members were already versed in these techniques, however, there was fine tuning required on various aspects, as also on the important issue of utilising local knowledge and information to get authentice information regarding resources and resource use.
- The plan and duration of the field research was also chalked out

**c. Participatory Micro Study at Village Level**

Equipped with formats questionnaires maps and schedules the most crucial aspects of the research the micro-study at the village level was taken up in three parts

- PRA exercises
- Resource Mapping and
- Generation of qualitative information.

These are not mutually exclusive. Each exercise informed and led to the other. They were participatory in nature, and aimed to develop a perception from the point of view of the people.

**P.R.A Exercise**

With the able help of local NGO personnel, the teams were able to established contact and rapports in the villages. The PRA exercises were then takes up with following components

**a. The social map**

In the social mapping exercise, a rapid appraisal of the entire village and its infrastructure and facilities was taken up with the participation of the village.

b. **Socio economic survey**

The social mapping facilitated collection of information on the socio-economic details. Using the social map, people identified the socio-economic details, which were taken down on a form to facilitate analysis.

c. **Wealth Ranking**

To assess the quality of life of the people as they themselves view it, a discussion on the well being of the different families in the village was initiated. The exercise using symbols of wealth and poverty as identified by different village communities helped to know the rich and the poor, as also the reasons for people being rich or poor

d. **Calendars**

Different calendars were made to know the yearly cycles that the people go through as regards food, employment, income, health and work. Separate discussions were held with women and men to know the experiences and situations of both.

e. **Problem identification**

Women and men in different groups identified their problems and prioritised them according to their different perceptions.

f. **Qualitative Information**

This rapid appraisal techniques were followed up by open ended interviews with different individuals including political representatives, and Government functionaries, as well as different interest groups like marginal farmers, migrant workers, loanees, etc. This was to help to get a sharper insight into the different situations and understand the reasons and compulsions and options that people are trying out.

g. **Resource Mapping**

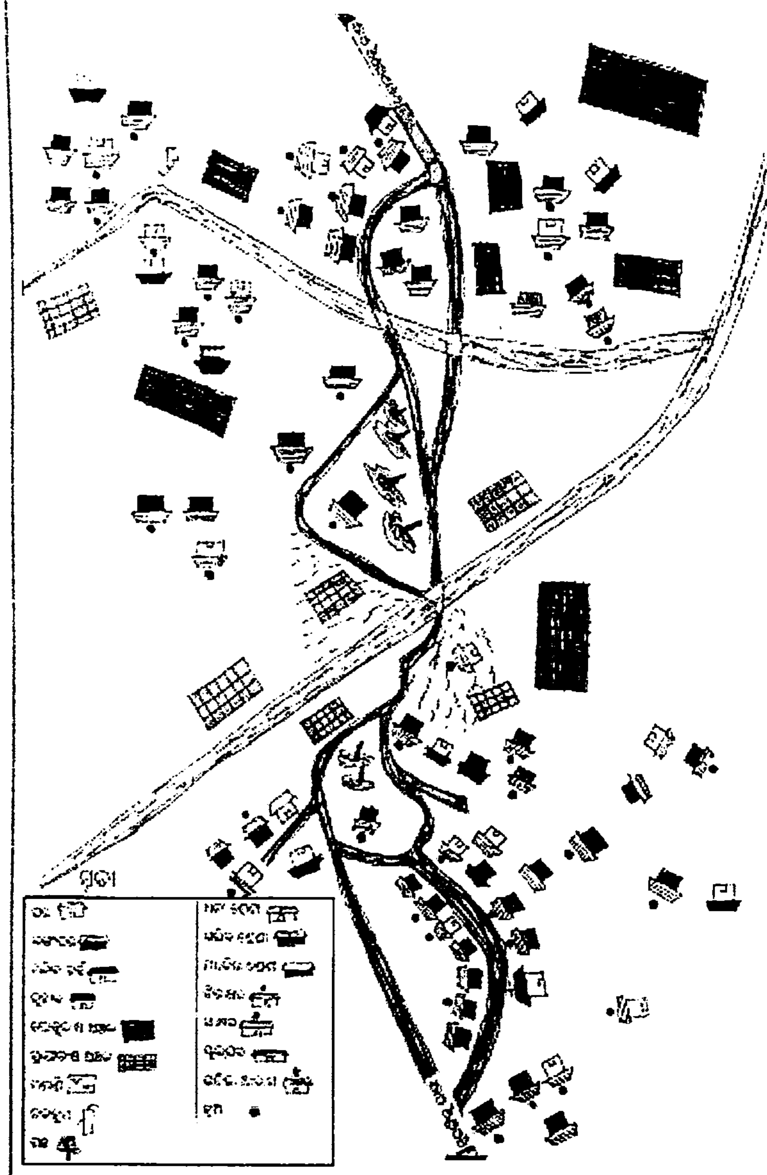
Villagers were helped to map their resources. For this a cadastral map of the villages was obtained, and a discussion with the villagers initiated:

In discussions with the villagers, different maps showing the resource situation and resource use patterns were taken up. This correlated with the socio-economic analysis and the PRA exercise helped form a more holistic picture of the situation indifferent villages. The Different maps thus formed were:

- Water resources
- Land types
- Cropping Pattern, and land use

# SOCIAL MAP: AYADA KARANASAHI
## BLOCK: RAYAGADA

## SOCIAL MAP: BARABA
## BLOCK : GUMMA



# 4. THE FINDINGS

## An Overview

At first sight, tribal villages appear to have much the same socio-economic situation. Rows of houses at the edge of forests or at a foothill, a bare subsistence living, insecure, and dependent on the whims of one or a few non-tribal despots, ever dependent on an elusive Govt. dole. But a closer look provides one with an indication of the various conditions and situations that affect the well-being of a family and a community in the tribal regions. Taken in bits and pieces, our findings are striking, if not absolutely new, but if we take the overall situation, then, one needs to really ask what are we doing just studying and researching? All we have to justify ourselves with is the short period of research, saying that we did not spend too much time finding out the seriousness of the problem, and now, we can think of getting into action. To begin with, three important factors all alarming must needs hold our attention these are not mutually exclusive areas. We use lables and divisions to describe and understand the life of the tribal people, but for the poor tribal peasant, life is one long stretch of trouble and strife, beginning and often ending with food insecurity. The three factors that srike one are:

a. Options in a tribal life.

b. Resources: human and natural resources, and

c. Government intervention,

The description below does not follow this pattern, but we would like to draw your attention to these crucial issues as that is what the findings of this study are all about. ***If we were to take up life as the tribal people do, we would find ourselves almost bereft of options and would, unless, we take the moneylender's or the liquor brewer's route, in almost all certainty be dead within a few days or a few***

***months time at the most. But, their resilience urges the tribal people to struggle on and never say die, and thus they literally push back the limits for survival.*** This was visible in the regions cleaved up by power generating reservoirs as much as in the hilly Saura belt where the cashew economy provided a tenuous sustenance. Yet each option, they seek is more difficult than the other, and there is little help they get from any quarter. And with the ever increasing control of market forces, these options seem more scarce and more difficult than ever before. In the sections that follow, we describe the alternatives that the tribal people try and create for themselves, doggedly, patiently, to seek to make ends meet. The sections speak for them selves. If we take Government interventions, we regret to say, we are forced to ask the question: is this what a democracy really means, is it worth even wasting that single day of standing in long queues and that effort of stamping on ballot papers for a system like this? Government intervention in the tribal regions has dis-empowered these communities more than anything else. If we combine all this with the resource picture in the tribal regions, then the picture of distress is complete. One gets a feeling that the tribal communities are fighting with their backs against the wall, and in a few years time, will loose completely even the little that they have today.

## Wage Labour

Across the districts that we studied, the wage labour does not go beyond Rs.30/-, even though the minimum wage rate at the time of study was Rs.42/-. In most instances of even employment in Government programmes, women received Rs.25, and men received Rs.30. For upto 6 months in a year, the poorer tribal families depend on wage labour. The sources of labour vary from agricultural employment to construction works, to Government employment, to migration to other cities and towns. Despite the substantial funds being spent on employment generation programmes in the Government we found that Government employment was hardly a dependable source of income / employment for the people. In all instances that we came across, including food for work, the project was contracted to private persons, who almost inevitably cheated the people of at least half their wages. Complaints to the BDO hardly brought any response. A case in point is Metaguda, in Badapdar in Kudumulguma Block, Malkangiri District. In this village, people worked for 15 days on a road construction from the Block,

under Mundru, a contractor from a neighbouring colony. For the first week, Mundru paid the men at the rate of Rs.40/- per day, and the women at the rate of Rs.35/- per day. The people, receiving higher wages than they did in other works worked enthusiastically the next week. Mundru, did not turn up with the payment. The people went to his house several times, and asked him about the money, Mundru kept on postponing payment. Now, after more than two years of complaining, people have given up expecting any payment. They have not got any further employment works from the Block either. Metaguda situated in one of the cut off areas of Kudumulguma Block is two days distance from the Block. People either have to take the boat, and walk over a distance of 70 kms partly on bus, and partly by foot, or go over the hills on foot, over a distance of 50kms. Thus, private contractors in this region can get away with any irregularities with no higher authorities to check their misdeeds. Metaguda is no exception. In villages such as Barba, in Gumma Block, Kukudagad, Kashipur Block, Ayoda Karansahi, Rayagada Block, similar instances are repeated. In Kukudagad, food for work rations were misappropriated by the contractor, in Ayoda Karansahi, the contractor undertook a road construction work. After two days, he discontinued the work. The people went to the BDO. According to them, the BDO showed them the records and pointed out that their signatures on the receipts had already been received, and the work was completed. The people having no response to this came back in silence.

The paucity of employment through Government programmes is clearly visible in the above table. People have received a maximum of 26 days' work from Government employment programmes over the last one year. It is apparent, thus, that people would hardly look to the state to provide them alternatives or options. In these programmes, also, as one can see, there is rampant exploitation, and people have not been paid their due wages, and in some cases, have not received wages at all. In fact it is very rare that all the people who can do wage work would be employed by a contractor for a Government programme.
Contractors become powerful despots in the tribal regions. With subtle backing from the administration, they deal as they want with the terror stricken tribals and cheat them in the payments for the various Government works. As they live in the neighbourhood of the tribal people, they also subdue the tribals with threats of sheer physical violence. There is little recourse for the tribal people in such cases, as

**Wage Employment from Government Employment Schemes:**

| Sl. | Village | SJSY | | EAS | | FFW | | RCP | | Others | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Per | Days | Per | Days | Per | Day | Per | Day | Per | Day |
| 1 | A.Karanshi | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | Tilli | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | Barba | 12 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | Tamasingh | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | Kanarpas | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | Tikilipadar | - | - | - | - | 20 | 7 | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | Kolloba | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | Rankuda | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | Metaguda | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | Ranginiguda | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | Pushghati | - | - | - | - | 26 | 7 | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | Kukudagada | - | - | - | - | 16 | 9 | - | - | 19 | 5 |

Explanations: per: persons; SJSY. Swarnajayanti Swarozgar Yojana; EAS: Employment Assurance Scheme; FFW: Food for Work; RCP: Rural Connectivity Programme, Others: The villagers were unable to ascertain

the money power of these contractors, is enough to win over any law keeping forces that the region might have. If people do resist, and insist on higher wages than the contractor is ready to give, then, labourers from neighbouring villages are brought in to work. Any aggression on the part of the resisting villagers is efficiently quelled by counter violence. Such is the case in the village of Tilli, where a prostitute called Dhanamani Karji holds sway. With her brothers, she terrorises hapless inhabitants of this village, and corners all the funds and, thus prevents the people of Tille from getting any of the benefits from Government schemes and programmes. Her nefarious linkages keeps the local administration mum, and the people are unable to appeal to anybody for justice. People say that Dahanmani's dealings affect the entire Panchayat of Lai lai, and prevent it from progressing.

Tribal families depend for 4 to 8 months on wage labour, depending on the condition of the surrounding forests, as also the annual harvest. In this situation of a buyers' market, tribal women are forced into the most backbreaking work, for the lowest wages. This includes transplantation, weeding, harvesting. All these jobs involve long hours of standing or moving in position bent double. Transplanting requires women to stand in ankle deep water throughout the day causing severe skin problems on the feet. In construction work, women do most of the manual carrying of weights, most of the time, lifting loads on cement mortar mixture to different heights as buildings go up. Women work at one third the rates that men do. This is in all areas of unorganised sector work, including Government works where men and women are supposed to get equal wages for unskilled work. In the tribal and rural areas, This would range from Rs. 10/- to Rs.15/-. Oftentimes, wages is paid in terms of grain, in which case, the labourers do not even have a means of measuring whether they have received their due or not. With the scarcity of employment, this is barely an amount that can sustain even one person. But, very often, the entire family has to be taken care of with this amount, as the prevalence of alcoholism encourages the earning male to keep most of his earnings for liquor. The repercussions on women's health of all this is untold, and are yet to be measured. But the ill health of women from the tribal and Harijan communities are there for all to see. The National Family Health Survey, 2000, findings report that women from tribal and Harijan families were on an average of significantly shorter stature than women from other communities. Stating that short stature is also strongly related to poverty, the report

establishes that illiterate women, women from scheduled castes and tribes, and women who are self-employed or who are employed by someone else are more likely to be short. It says that one in every six women living in households with a low standard of living is below 145cms, compared with 1 in every ten women living in households with a high standard of living. Nutrtional and health problems are also more prevalent in women from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households. The highest percentage of women with mean body mass index below the standard of 18.5 were found amongst the Scheduled tribe category. The prevalence of anaemia is most common amongst tribal women, with 74.7% Scheduled tribe women exhibiting mild to severe anaemia. The NHFS explains the low health status of tribal women by their poor nutritional intake. Their survey indicates that tribal women have the least consumption of all nutritive foods (including meat or chicken, eggs, fruits, milk or curds, or green leafy vegetables, or even pulses and beans) as compared to all other classes of women in Orissa.

Wage labour is not always available close by. People found alternatives by migrating to places as far away as Assam, Bombay, Goa, Chennai. These experiences are not always happy, and the ignorant tribal migrant has often had to face several risks and problems in seeking sustenance in places far away.

Illustrative is the case of Dema Sabar of Ayoda Karansahi of Rayagada Block. Dema Sabar's brother Demo, was taken away by a tribal landlord on a two year labour contract, much against Dema's advise. Demo's absence meant the shortage of a precious earning member in the family, and to make up for the consequent decrease in income, Dema migrated to Camay in 2001 with 16 other people from the neighbouring Shankarada village, along with a contractor, who promised to pay them Rs.100/- per day, in addition to providing them boarding and lodging. At the time of migration, in the October, of a year of poor rainfall, this seemed a windfall. Dema and his companions found the work quite fine for about a week. The only thing that troubled them, was the absence of Palm wine! However, as the days wore on, the work became more strenuous, and the contractor more demanding, beating them up to extract more work. Cooked food of poor quality was provided by the contractor. Their signature was taken every weak, and the contractor advanced them small amounts against their daily needs. At the end of 6 months, with the call of the agricultural season, Dema and his

companions approached the contractor to pay them their dues, so that they could return. He gave them Rs.2600 per head, and abused them severely when they demanded more. They were forced to return with this paltry sum to show their families at the end of 6 months of hard labour. Dema says, the anger of his wife was much worse than all the abuses of the contractor, and so he will never migrate again.

But even the small amounts of cash that the people bring with them when they return home from migration renders them vulnerable to local lumpen elements. Some years back, such an incident lead to a tribal outburst in R. Udaygiri Block of Gajapati District, when a mob of more than 5000 burnt two undertrials alive, when the police failed to provide them justice. In Barba village of Guma Block, we came across a man who had narrowly escaped death, but still carried the scars of the attack, when he lost his 6 months earnings on his return from Camay. The young, however, seem to be able to take migration in their stride, and we came across young boys, who enjoyed going to far away places, to earn a living. Women seldom migrate, we hardly found any instance where entire families migrated. Women face the burden of poverty, having to look after the household single-handedly, while the men stay away for many months. This often makes them more vulnerable as they are often forced to take loans for household expenses.

The villages adjacent to Tibetan colonies in Mohana Block provide a stark study in contrast. The Tibetan settlements are an oasis of affluence, in the midst of an overall scenario of dreary poverty of the tribal regions. In the village of Rankuda, Jirango Panchayat, we got an idea of the reasons behind this. Rankuda village is close to the Tibetan settlement in Jirang, 3kms away. A dependence relationship between the tribal people and the Tibetan community has emerged over the years, which practically substitutes the relationship of the tribal with a local landlord. Thus, the Tibetan families offer an easy source of loan to the tribal families. If the tribal family is unable to re-pay it in cash, then he goes and works for the Tibetan. All Tibetans have been provided with agricultural land. Thus very often, the tribal provide cheap labour to the Tibetan community, while the latter thrive with maize and other forms of cultivation. The villagers also complain that the Government has given them special provisions, while ignoring the needs of the tribal people. The villagers are specially aggrieved as Government wastes that they had been cultivating traiditionally, is now settled in the name

of the Tibetan inhabitants. The tribal population, as well as the overall socio-economic and political situation of Mohana has been affected by the resettlement of Tibetan refugees in the early 60s Chandragiri. Tibetans have been settled in 5 Panchayats, and amongst other things were provided agricultural lands and loans to help them settle down. While the national and international attention focused on the plight of these refugees, and aid and resources were poured in to resettle them, the tribal community continued in its poverty stricken state.

Today, the Tibetan communities provide a startling contrast to the rest of the region, with well maintained colonies, having all amenities, including schools, hospitals, colleges, and the residents going around in two wheelers, with walkmans, and imported clothing, contrasted to the tribal villages which present no picture of developmental change in any manner. There is a resentment against the Tibetan community for the quantity of aid that has been given to them, even though the tribal families around the settlement depend on them almost in the same way as they would depend on a local moneylender for timely loans, underpaid, but easily accessed employment, etc.

### Markets

The most cruel master of the tribal peoples is perhaps the market. Whatever the tribal does, he is a looser in the market economy. Whether it is purchase or selling, the tribal always looses out. Are there any exceptions? Well, in an strange way, we did find exceptions: in those instances, where a tribal is producing liquor, he is able to sell at a profit, and achieve a fair amount of relative affluence within the tribal community, but, then, here, the tribal has assumed the role and function of the non-tribal, and is an exploiter of the rest of the tribal community. A variety of forest products and cash crops are available in the tribal regions. But, the seasonal production of these crops, traps the tribals in a cycle of exploitation. They are unable to store these crops in any effective manner. Thus, each season sees a market glut of the various tribal products. The middle-men and traders reap most of the benefit.

In the village of Tilli, in Lailai Panchayat, Rayagada Block, people have brought extensive areas of the hills under cashew plantations. The people learnt the idea from efforts in neighbouring villages. They have collected seeds from their relatives who have cashew plantations, developed by the Government departments. Initially, people made

mistakes, and the density of plantations was too high. Subsequently, the efforts of the villagers caught the attention of the Government who gave them the technical support to have proper plantations. Now, in the village of Tilli on an average, a household gets about 5qtls of cashew. This should fetch them about Rs.10,000, without any processing. Yet, the people of Tilli find it difficult to access even the weekly market, which is 8kms away, in a place called Ghatitala. They are thus trapped by the petty traders, who force them to barter away this valuable produce for everyday commodities like rice, dry fish, onions etc. at rates that would range from Rs.6 to Rs.10 per kg. Thus a family on an average does not get more than Rs.5000/- per year from their cashew crop. The paradox is that the people shirk to carry their products to the weekly market to sell, but, they transport the same things for the traders who pay them Rs.10 per load.

In the villages of Thuamulrampur, one gets an idea of the market dynamics in remote tribal areas. In the village of Kanarpas, people primarily collect tamarind and broom, and produce a range of agricultural crops for the market. They carry these items to the edge of the reservoir, a 10 km. Journey on foot, and then take it across the reservoir to Mahulpatna market to sell. The market in Mahulpatna has a complete control over the prices of these products. Having travelled half a day with a heavy load to reach the market, they have no means of taking it back, nor are there any alternate markets nearby. Local competition, as all neighbouring villages converge in Mahulpatna to sell their goods nullifies any demand they might make for higher pricing. Some traders come to the village to buy the produce. Most of these people are creditors from whom the tribal people have borrowed sometime earlier in the year. The usual understanding is that along with repayment of debt, the entire crop against which the moany was borrowed would be sold to the creditor.

What is the Government intervention in all this. The Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation has been set up, primarily for helping tribal communities market minor forest produce. Yet, the presence of the TDCCOL is not there in any of the villages or even the Panchayats visited. As is clearly visible from the table below, there is no price stabilisation, and the rates vary widely from place to place. In the absence of such supports it is but natural that the primary collectors of forest produce would be victimised by the market. The new Minor Forest Produce Policy formulated in 2000, has little to say about price fixation.

There are acute disadvantages that the tribal producers face when they take their goods to the market. Not only are they forced to accept the measures used by the traders, which are usually unstandardised weights like a stone, which is supposed to be 10kgs, or volume measures, they also have little options that they can exercise, living as they do in remote regions with difficult access. The indebtedness factor also plays a major role. Often entire crops are mortgaged for loans taken earlier on in the year. This gives the creditor monopolistic rights over the producer, and he is able to dictate prices. Procurement prices are almost never even communicated to the producers in the tribal regions. An intervention in this area by an interest who plays fair can go a long way to help the producers get better prices. For example, in the village of Pusghati, the people were able to sell broom grass bundles at Rs.10 per kg because of the presence of the tribal women's collective, Amasangathan. However for all other items, they producers were getting between Rs.4 and Rs.1.50. the prices of brooms were much more competitive because of the presence of Amasangathan, which had an interest in brooms. Also, Amasangathan had developed technology for values addition of the brooms, this also helped in the increased pricing of brooms. This was not possible for the range of other items, as there was no competitive buyer.The situation becomes even more acute in such places like Metaguda, which is in the Badapadar Panchayat in the cut off area of Kudmulguma Block, Malkangiri District. Living at the edge of the forest, the people collect brooms, Char berries, Jaffra, for selling in the local market. Here, the traders from Chitrakonda have a monopoly. They bring goods like salt and dry fish, to the local market, which they barter at ridiculously low rates with the tribal people. Thus 1qtl. of brooms would fetch the tribal Rs.500/- worth of goods, whereas, its actual market price would be anything between Rs.1000 to Rs.1200/-. Here, just the Government facilities like Block head quarter, a bank or the Government health facility etc. are two day's journey away. The tribal people would rather stay back in their villages, than waste precious time and money for something that would be quite elusive anyway.

## Credit

The landlord or moneylender, which are mostly rolled into one in the tribal villages is seen as a magnanimous benefactor, who can save the tribal in times of dire need. The villages where there is no resident 'Sahukar' see themselves as denied and deprived. We do not have a

Sahukar, is often the sad response when we ask people in such communities what is their option when they do not have food, or when they have other financial needs. Of late, banks have been making increasing effort to lend in the villages, and there are several schemes offering subsidies to tribals through bank lending. Yet, the hold of the local moneylender continues, and banks are unable to make much headway in in the matter of inducing tribal communities to come to them to borrow.

If we look at the overall indebtedness situation, the divide between the rich and the poor is clear where informal sector loans are

concerned. In 4 out of the 12 villages, none from the rich category have taken loans. In the poor category of families, only in the village of Kollaba is the informal sector loan position zero. In most other villages, the number of families from the rich section who have taken loans is much less than the number of families from the poorer sections who are indebted even in terms of overall percentages. In the village of Pushghati, all the families from the poor class are indebted to the local moneylender. Even as compared to the medium class section of the villages studied, the poor are more indebted in 7 out of the 12 villages.

Formal sector loans on the whole have been accessed much less by all sections of the population. Here also, the rich are much less indebted than the poorer sections of the population. The rich have gone in much less for formal sector loans than the poor. It is only in the medium category that we find the highest percentage of people who have gone in for formal sector loans. On asking, most of the villagers say that they would rather not take a loan from the bank. The reasons given is that they can never return the loan, and that the officials harass them if they are not able to repay on time. How is it then that people have taken loans. On further probing, we found that most of the people from the poor and medium category had been drawn into taking loans from the bank because of the lure of the subsidy. But in most of the cases, these hapless people had been cheated of most of the subsidy amount by various middle-men, and were thus just haplessly indebted to the bank with no benefits with the added burden of interest to weigh them down.

Illustrative is the case of Mohana Block. With two banks, the United Bank of India, and the Canara Bank operating in the Block, there are ample opportunities for availing credit. Yet, people still prefer to go to the traditional institutions. The Bank Manager Canara Bank explains it

**Percentage of Households Indebted to Different Institution:**

| Sl No | Village | Rich Households | | | | | | Medium Households | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Shk | Bnk | Ngo | Lmp | Oth | Nil | Shk | Bnk | Ngo | Lmp | Oth | Nil |
| 1 | A. Karana sahi | 45 | 15 | 12 | 2 | 12 | 13 | 33 | 40 | 14 | - | - | 13 |
| 2 | Tilli | 20 | 14 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 41 | 30 | 9 | 15 | 20 | 20 | 6 |
| 3 | Barba | 17 | - | - | - | - | 83 | 28 | 9 | 7 | 14 | 14 | 28 |
| 4 | Tamasing | 90 | - | - | - | - | 10 | 47 | 27 | 5 | - | 12 | 9 |
| 5 | Kanerpas | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | 5 | 45 | - | - | - | 50 |
| 6 | Tikilipadar | 46 | 4 | - | - | - | 50 | 52 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 44 |
| 7 | Kolloba | - | 34 | 34 | - | - | 32 | - | 67 | - | - | - | 33 |
| 8 | Rankuda | 34 | - | - | - | - | 66 | - | 17 | - | - | - | 83 |
| 9 | Metaguda | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | 20 | - | - | - | - | 80 |
| 10 | Ranginiguda | 29 | - | - | 43 | - | 14 | 38 | 20 | - | - | 17 | 25 |
| 11 | Pushghati | 67 | - | - | - | - | 9 | 16 | 22 | - | - | - | 62 |
| 12 | Kukudagada | - | - | - | - | - | 60 | 12 | 38 | - | 3 | - | 47 |

**Explanations: Shk: Sahukar; Bnk: Bank; Lmp - Lamp**

**Ngo: Non-governmental organisation;**

## Percentage of Households Indebted to Different Institution:

| Sl No | Village | Poor Households | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Shk | Bnk | Ngo | Lmp | Oth | Nil |
| 1 | A. Karana sahi | 45 | 15 | 12 | 2 | 12 | 13 |
| 2 | Tilli | 20 | 14 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 41 |
| 3 | Barba | 17 | - | - | - | - | 83 |
| 4 | Tamasing | 90 | - | - | - | - | 10 |
| 5 | Kanerpas | - | - | - | - | - | 100 |
| 6 | Tikilipadar | 46 | 4 | - | - | - | 50 |
| 7 | Kolloba | - | 34 | 34 | - | - | 32 |
| 8 | Rankuda | 34 | - | - | - | - | 66 |
| 9 | Metaguda | - | - | - | - | - | 100 |
| 10 | Ranginiguda | 29 | - | - | 43 | - | 14 |
| 11 | Pushghati | 67 | - | - | - | - | 9 |
| 12 | Kukudagada | - | - | - | - | - | 60 |

**Explanations: Shk: Sahukar; Bnk: Bank; Lmp - Lamp**

**Ngo: Non-governmental organisation;**

away as the reluctance of the people to follow the rules and procedures of the Banks, but also admits that banks do not provide loans for non-productive activities. On the other hand, those who have taken loans from the banks do not seem interested to re-pay the loans. 60% of the loans have not been re-paid. This is also a major complaint. The Banks are at the moment promoting loans under various Government schemes they say, but the major activity seems to be promotion of SHGs. The Canara Bank is working with 34 SHGs, while the United Bank of India is working with 140 SHGs presently according to the managers.

Banks also have complicated procedures for sanctioning loans, which puts the illiterate tribal peasant at a sore disadvantage, and renders him vulnerable to various forms of extortion. We came across pitiful stories of the exploitation of the tribal at the hands of the Sahukar also. We shall relate here just one story, that is slightly unusual to show that the extent of exploitation might vary, but patterns rarely do, and go into of others, as such stories are well known and widely recounted:

In Kukudagad, Munusgaon Gram Panchayat, Bahana Majhi was sanctioned a loan of Rs.10,000 by the State Bank. Bahana Majhi had 12 acres of land, but no bullocks, and was thus always borrowing from the local 'Sahukar' for cultivating his fields. When Bahana Majhi learnt of subsidised loans provided by the State Bank, Kashipur, he felt that this was a golden opportunity to get out of the clutches of the Sahukar, and so approached his Sarpanch. The Sarpanch and Secretary made him run to and fro to the bank several times, and soon Bahana discovered that these two did not have the best of intentions. Bahana went straight to the Bank Manager, who duly expedited the process. In one month's time, Bahana got his sanction of Rs. 10,000 loan with a 50% subsidy. The bank manager explained the terms and conditions of the loan to Bahana, told him about the subsidy, and warned him to be careful about the Sarpanch and the Secretary. Bahana took the money, and made his way back. As predicted, enroute from the bank, Bahana was accosted by the Sarpanch, Secretary, and a Ward members, who relieved him of Rs.4000/-. Why, they did not take the entire money, is anybody's guess.

Though shocked, Bahana did not loose heart, and spent the remaining money wisely, buying a pair of bullocks, and taking up the cultivation of his land with much zeal. Fortune, however did not favour Bahana. His bullocks died one by one due to unknown diseases, and Bahana is

worse off than ever before, as now, not only has he no bullocks as before, but also has a burden of loan on his head, with part of his land mortgaged to the bank. Bahana has no idea how he will repay the loan, so far he has been able to repay only Rs.100/-

This is not a unique story, there are several Bahanas, in the villages we studied, with the variations of local flavour, where the VLWs or other educated persons in the locality are involved, and one gets a better understanding of the terror the poor tribal would have of depending on institutionalised finance for any of their needs. As we can see, not only are they trapped by the heavy burden of loan, but the lack of reliable services like veterinary facilities, effective insurance of assets, etc. makes them vulnerable and insecure with any productive assets created from the loan. If one compares these institutionalised systems with the traditional system, then, the latter has some defenite advantages. It is much closer than the banks which are located at the Block or at best Panchayat head quarters. But, what is much more problematic is the long time taken to process a loan, and the several procedures involved. This force the illiterate tribal aspirant to depend on a middleman, who conveniently relieves him of substantial portions of the money, if not the entire subsidy amount. Also, the inability to repay makes the banks inaccessible to the tribal family for ever after that. The entire family, sons, wives, and even members of the extended family are then debarred from accessing these facilities. On the other hand, the local Sahukar, is ever ready to lend, and is flexible about the quantities, and has easily understood, and simple procedures, but extracts his pound of flesh.

Slightly less terrible, is the situation of Banaka Paika, of Rankuda village who had taken a loan of Rs. 2000 from one of the Tibetan families. Due to crop failure, he was able to repay only Rs. 1000/-. The Tibetan moneylender has agreed that he can repay the rest of the loan through labour in his fields at the rate of Rs.20/- per day. Banaka is not compelled to work everyday in his Tibetan landlords' fields. He goes whenever he has free time. He has been able to pay another Rs.300/- till date. There are several other tribals in Rankuda who have taken such loans from the Tibetan families. The tribetans are much softer than the local landlords in their extortion, but they are exploitative all the same. Between the devil and the deep sea, if the tribal makes a choice who is to blame him! After all, a known devil of the local moneylender would appear to him much better than the deep sea of institutional finance

with its forms, and 'procedures' and rituals, backed by the inevitable middleman, who would take his cut as also his profits made on the sly.

The banks did talk of SHGs, and we also discussed SHGs with representatives of NGOs. But in the Blocks we visited, SHG coverage was very poor, either through the initiatives of banks or Government or NGOs. In the few villages where we found SHGs, we found that after having loaned to two or three persons from their savings, the groups had become inactive as the people who had taken the loans had not bothered to return the amounts. This is a general problem with most SHGs. The groups are active and good till one or two people start to default. Then, the interest of the other members wanes, and the group also becomes inactive. In the tribal hinterlands with but an exploitative and monopolistic market, checking default also becomes a problem, as people are unable to get returns in cash for investments they make. It is also not what they are looking for. They would much rather get the returns in terms of kind, and so a barter economy still largely prevails in these regions. For example, in the village of Kolaba, the women had formed an SHG and saved Rs.700/-. This was about two years back. However, the savings is inactive, and women do not know what to do with it, as the organisation which initiated the SHG, Samman, is no longer active in the village. There are no records or register for the savings. In Tilli, the organisation SWWS had initiated an SHG, but, the SHG could not continue as SWWS withdrew due to some tensions in the village. The savings is inactive. In the village of Rankuda, the SHG had initially been active, and a few women had borrowed to good benefit however. However, when the study team visited the village, the fund was inactive. The savings had been circulated within the villages, and not held in a bank account. In most of the villages, people seemed to prefer it that way.

## Quality of Life

Using the easiest methods to assess the poor and the rich, in the villages, we let the people tell us who were rich and who were poor in the village. There was an initial hesitation, but as the study progressed, and people's familiarity with us increased, they became more relaxed and shared their information with us. Quality of life rankings are often highly subjective, depending on the cultural context and a complexity of socio-economic circumstances. We attempted to overcome these subjective assessments by allowing the people to state their own criteria

for ranking people as rich, poor or medium in wealth. Criteria commonly used for ranking a family as wealthy was that they had food to eat throughout the year, they had irrigated land, and no loans from outside, they had larger families, and were able to grow a range of crops, and are able to employ labour on their land. Criteria used for the poor was that they had less than half acre of land, depended on wage labour, were not able to have enough food throughout the year, and had very few cattle, usually had to hire bullocks for cultivation, and had very few people in the house. Almost in almost all discussions, availability of food was a major criteria for well-being ranking. The ability to give loans to others was also ranked as an important criteria for assessing a family as wealthy. It is interesting to note that none of the people identified health or educations as a criteria for well being ranking.

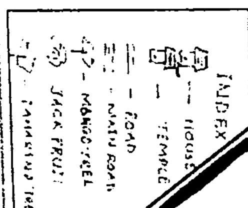
Visible signs of differences between the rich and the poor were few, and was marked more in the behaviour and relationships maintained. Some of the affluent owned better houses, and better clothes, but this was not apparent throughout between the people ranked rich and the people ranked poor. For example in the village of Rankuda, we found that those who were ranked rich apart from having land, and other assets as identified above were also people who commanded respect in the village. They ordered the others about, and were most vociferous in the villages. They also sent their children to school. Amongst the poor, on the other hand, the majority of the children had dropped out of school, and several of the Scheduled Caste children were working with the Tibetans, accompanying them to different places to trade their wares. Most of the people from the poorer families also found the Tibetans a convenient source of employment.

In the village of Kolaba, however, there was not much visible signs of difference between the wealthier and the poorer. The poorest families are those displaced from Barba village by the Harabhangi hydel project

In the village of Tilli, the wealthier category of people had better houses and also had surplus agricultural produce which they sold whenever they needed money. Amongst the poor, poor health apart from thatch roof was a major visible sign of impoverishment. Needless to say, the better off were also the people who were able to send their children to school beyond the primary stage. Amongst the middle category, also, a large percentage of children are being educated.

But, there were strange contradictions also, in the reasons for well being identified and their rankings. For example, in some of the villages,

# SOCIAL MAP: RANKUDA
# BLOCK: MOHONA



people used a symbol of large families for poorer households, their explanation being that where there were too many people, the family would be poor, but we found that the study gave a different picture. Families who were ranked wealthy by the people had average to large sized households, with 2 to 4 people above the age of 14, and by far the majority of them having 3 or more children. Ofcourse, many of these households studied were joint or extended households, with father and married son with family, or an unmarried brother staying on with the elder brother. In the poorest families, we found several instances, where there was just one person in the household.

We also found exceptions to the positive correlation between land holding and wealth. There were families who had no land, but were fairly well off, because there were earning members in the family. In several of these families, people were migrating seasonally for work. Obviously seasonal migrations, despite all the risks involved did help in meeting the families economic needs. But, as the average age in the households increase migrations seem to go down. The economic well-being of such families goes down also with age. Thus, migrations could perhaps help in increasing family income, but, are no options for long term food security. There were also families who had land, but were unable to cultivate it, and had been classified as poor. Most of these families had very few members.

The most glaring anomaly are in the issue of BPL cards. In several of the discussions, people admitted that they did not deserve them, but, were still issued BPL cards. They also lamented that often, the deserving were not issued BPL cards reasons cited for this were varied. In some instance, the people said that surveys had been undertaken in an arbitrary manner, when most of the people were in the field. In other instances, people said that the VLW has used his own judgement without proper consultation with the people. The major difference in the BPL card holders was in the purchasing power. Almost 50% of the people who were from the poorer families said they were unable to buy PDS rice, in the most needy period. Thus. They were forced to depend on wage labour, even if they did have BPL cards.

## Government Programmes

Government interventions in the tribal regions are conspicuous by their invisibility. The tribal people on their part are eager to avail of the

benefits of the programmes, but we found that in most cases, they had given up expecting anything, either because they had applied several times with little response from the administration, or because the very process of applying is so difficult with the access to the Block and Government officials being so far away, and several trips having to be made to these places for processing of any loans, etc. We also found that the better off in the villages were able to corner much of the facilities like Indira Awas, and BPL cards, whereas the majority of the poor were left high and dry.

For example, in the village of Kolaba, a check dam had been constructed in 1996. When the study team visited the village in March 2002, it was found in a damaged condition. According to local reports, the dam had broken in two years time. No programme has been taken up subsequently. There are no Government functionaries visiting this village either in any capacity. The village does not get the benefit of the ICDS programme, or have a school in the vicinity. Two children a boy and a girl study in residential schools of the SC and ST department. Where do they go for wage labour, when they do not have anything to eat? They go to nearby villages for wage labour. This employment is seasonal agricultural work For the rest of the time, the people depend on the forest produce, which they collect to sell in the local market in Domadua, the Panchayat head quarters.

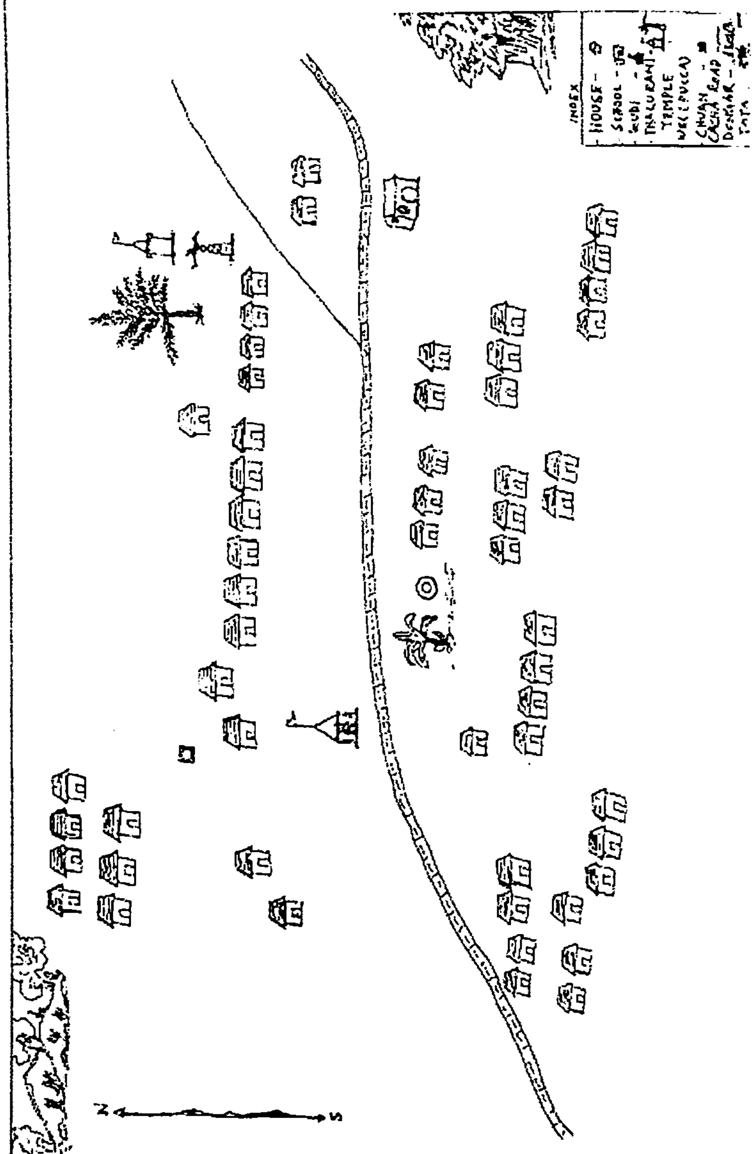
About 7 families have taken loans from the bank for leaf plate in the year 1999. They were offered the loan, and they accepted it they tell us. But the loan is outstanding against their names, and they have not been able to make regular returns for repayment of the loan. The villagers are unable to get a good price for the leaf plates, and so are unable to pay back instalments regularly. Situated in the middle of forests, the people of Kolaba practically live in the lap of nature, and depend majorly on forest produce. They have never gone to the Block office nor petitioned for any facilities or help of any kind. The Block headquarters is 23 kms from the village. We cannot afford to go to the Block they tell us, who will do our work if we go, they ask? Out of a total of 13 BPL beneficiaries, 1 person belongs to the affluent section, while 9 belong to the poor category. A total of 7 families ranked as poor by the residents of Kolaba are not ranked as BPL. A school by Samman, a local NGO had run for about 4 months, then, that school had also stopped. The closest health facility was the health sub-centre in Domadua. However, in cases of acute illness, people preferred to go

to Adaba, as the Domadua facility was irregularly manned. But more often, people preferred to treat the patient with their own medicines.

The inequalities, and the wrong identifications increase as we come into the districts of Kalahandi, the villages of Tikilipadar and Kanarpas, Thumulrampur Block. In Tikilipadar 50% of the people identified as poor by the village are BPL card holders, 25% of the people identified as rich and 65% as those identified as medium are BPL Card holders. This means that half the poor in the village do not have a BPL card. Not only does this mean that this group of the needy will be denied access to provisions under the PDS, but also will not be able to avail of several programmes that are meant specially for BPL families. In the village of Kanarpas, the situation is much worse. Only one family identifies as poor by the village has BPL card. What about the others? In these villages, there is no identification of anybody under the Anapurna Ana Yojana, except 5% of the medium class families in Kanarpas. Like wise, only 7.5 % of the poor calss family have been identified for Antodaya provisions in Tikilipadar village. Identifications under the BPL, the Anapurna and the Antodaya scheme are given much importance by the people, as this helps them access welfare provisions for rice directly. The situation is similar across the border in Kashipur Block of Rayagada District. Here, 25% of the families identified as poor by the village, in Pushghati village, and 6% of the families identified as poor in Kukudagad village have been identified for BPL cards. Under the other two schemes, the identification does not go beyond 4%.

In Mohana block, Gajapati District the village of Rankuda, is better connected and more accessible than Kolaba. The village is visibly different from the much more remote village of Kolaba, and it also shows visible sign of progress in the condition of houses, the facilities within villages, as also the total number of educated people. Two people have received roofing tiles under the JGSY in 2000. A hand pump had been installed in the year 1990. The ICDS centre however is 2kms away, and children have not received any nutrition, either pre-cooked or as dry-rations from there for the last two months. The villagers did not seem to particularly feel the need of the programme. A road construction work taken up close by provided employment for 15 people of Rankuda for about 10 days in the year 2000. The villagers have petitioned to the Blcok for a lift irrigation project and for electricity, but there has been no response from the government. The BDO on

# SOCIAL MAP: TIKILIPADAR



his part claims that he has not received any applications from the villagers of Rankuda. Apart from the children going to the neighbouring school, there are 2children going to residential schools. The village has several matriculates, and one person who has finished graduation. One boy has taken up engineering after the 12th std,

There was little understanding of processes of local Governance and hardly any participation of the people in such institutions as Gram Sabha or the Pali Sabha. There is often a feeling that the Gram Sabha is only meant for the leaders and the people with high status in the village. In the few instances, where Pali Sabha meetings had been organised, the reports were that very few people attended. Even in these instances, beneficiary selections of the Pali Sabha were ignored or bypassed, and thus most people felt very disillusioned about such meetings. How are resolutions and decisions made and passed if such meetings are not held? We found that in several instances, Ward members circulated papers in which signatures were collected for passing resolutions elsewhere. People are coerced through various means to give signatures for various reasons. It often appeared that people had given up even asking what the signatures were being collected for.

In Tilli, people had attended the Pali Sabha meeting. But the beneficiary selection made by them for the IAY and roofing and BPL identification was changed in the Gram Sabha. People are under the impression, that the Gram Sabhas are only for elected members. Their application for a checkdam had also been ignored. When the Ward member was asked why he did not protest, he said he was helpless in front of the Sarpanch. The poorer families selected for various benefits in the Pali Sabha of Tilli had all been ignored

An interesting example is provided in Kanarpas village. The Pali Sabha of Kanarpas selected Ghasi Majhi as the Indira Awas beneficiary for the Durmusi-Kanarpas Ward in the year 2000. The Sarpanch told Ghasi Majhi that he would have to pay some money to get the sanction. Ghasi borrowed Rs.5000/- from the money lender. The Sarpanch took Rs.3000/- and he received the work order for the Indira Awas House. Ghasi spent the rest of the money to make bricks for the house. As first sanction, Ghasi received Rs.5000/- from the Block. Part of the money was used to pay the brick makers, and as part loan repayment to the moneylender. However, Ghasi never received any further money from

## Access to Government Welfare Schemes

| Sl. | Villages | Rich (%) | | | | | | Medium (%) | | | | | | Poor (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | BPL | Oap | Ana | Antd | IAY | Rf. | BPL | OAP | Ana. | Antd | IAY | Rf. | BPL | OAP | Ana. | Antd | IAY | Rf. |
| 1 | A. Karansahi | 61 | 7 | - | 11 | 16 | - | 80 | - | - | - | 47. | - | 97 | - | - | - | 11.1 | 6 |
| 2 | Tilli | 65 | 5 | 7 | - | 23 | 47 | 60 | 6.7 | 53 | - | 27 | 40 | 84 | 5.56 | - | - | 23 | 33 |
| 3 | Barba | 10 | - | - | - | 8 | 25 | 64 | 14.3 | 7 | - | - | 7 | 75 | - | - | - | 10 | 10 |
| 4 | Tamasingh | 70 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 61 | - | - | - | - | - | 75 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | Kanarpas | 25 | - | - | - | - | - | 68 | 10 | 5 | - | 10 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | Tikilipadar | 33 | - | - | - | - | - | 65 | 8 | - | 7.5 | - | - | 50 | - | - | - | 50 | - |
| 7 | Kolloba | 67 | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | 50 | 6.25 | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | Rankuda | 50 | - | - | - | - | - | 83 | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | 20 | - | 34 | - | - |
| 9 | Metaguda | 60 | 20 | - | - | 40 | - | 70 | 10 | - | - | 60 | - | 55 | - | - | 22 | 22 | - |
| 10 | Ranginigud | 85 | 14 | - | - | 14 | - | 62 | 25 | - | - | - | - | 27 | 3.05 | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | Pushghati | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 25 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12 | Kukudagad | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | 3 | - | 3 | .75 | - | 6 | 2.99 | - | 4 | .1 | - |

the Block. He has made several trips to the Block office, but has been sent away by the authorities empty handed.

The major source of income for most of the people in the tribal regions is wage labour for three to 6 months in a year, depending on the condition of forests in the region. However, employment generation works of the Government were rare. Even though, we found that expenditure in a single year in a Tribal Block on just employment generation works could be anything upward of Rs.9 crores, most of the villages taken up for study, had not had the benefit of an employment generation programme in the last three years. People resorted to agricultural wage labour most often. Where the villages were better connected, people resorted to migration. But, there was still much food insecurity in the villages, and the Government provided little support. And even when the support was forthcoming, there was much irregularity in the works, and the tribal people benefited the least, as was evident from the various instance of underpayment and non-payment of wages, and even non-completion of works that we came across. Only in the case of Ranginiguda was there an employment work in progress, when the team took up study.

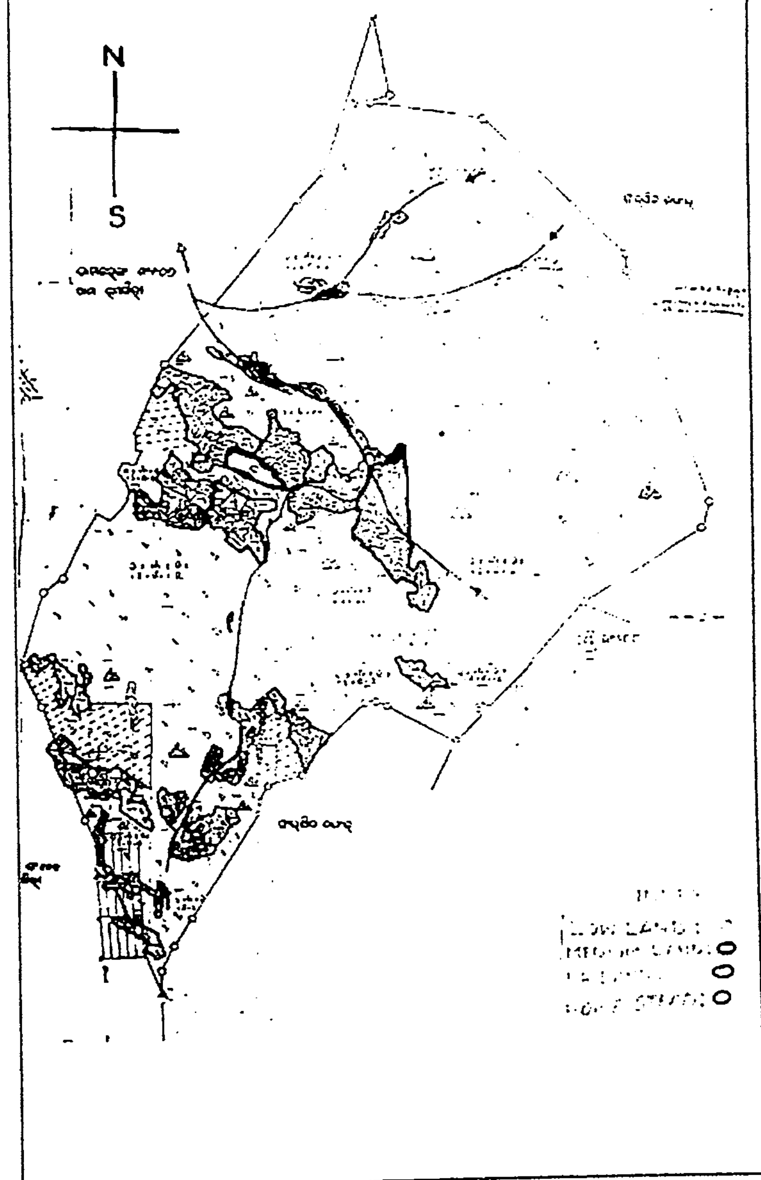
Illustrative of the neglect of Government is the village of Metaguda, which we have already show-cased earlier, providing an instance of corruption in employment works. In the village of Metaguda, in Malkangiri, 10 families have received Indira Awas houses in the year 2001. Out of these, 6 families are medium, and two are from well off families, and two families are ranked poor. In 2000, a shallow well had been constructed for drinking water purposes. The Anganwadi centre for Metaguda was in Panasgandhi, 2 kms from the village. ICDS rations had not been received in the village for several months. With Block facilities more than two days of journeying away, the people of Metaguda depended on traditional moneylenders for most credit requirements. At the time of study, most of them had outstanding loans from the local moneylender, Mundru, who is also contractor in the region. Needless to say, the people seldom go to the Block with any of their problems or their needs. 4 families from the affluent category, 8 families from the medium and 5 families from the poor category are BPL card holders. 2 poor families have received antodaya cards. The PDS commodities are available from the colony which is about one and a half kms away once a month. Visits of Government officials are rare. The people depend

primarily on local and traditional medicines, and hardly even think of Government medical facilities.

A major casuality in the tribal villages is the condition of health care. In almost all the villages studied, people took recourse to traditional health systems, as the Government facility was too far away, or irregular, or too costly. During the course of the study, teams found people dying in the villages due to want of health care. Illustrative is the case of Sarathi Sabara of Tilli village. Sarathi Sabara had sent his wife to lift PDS rations from Ghati Tala, 8 km downhill from Tilli. Sarathi himself had gone for wage labour and so had little options. She was 9 months pregnant with her third child. Soon after undertaking this difficult task, she went into labour and was unable to recover following the delivery of the child. Sarathi went to Narayanpur, 23 kms away. The private doctor from Narayanpur refused to come and sent his compounder instead. On seeing her condition, the compounder declared that he was helpless, and suggested that Sarthi take his wife to Rayagada, the Block headquarters, 40kms away. However, she was in no condition to be taken, as she was in too much pain, and eventually died. Sarthi despite his sorrow and distress was at great pains to save the child. He could not find anybody in the village to accompany him, finally, it was only after the team finished their work, that he went down with them to have his child checked up.

With proper health facilities, perhaps, this death could have been avoided. It is difficult to say what was the real reason behind it. The ANM in Rayagada has her own interpretation. According to her, this could have been avoided if Sarthi's wife had not gone down to fetch the PDS rations two days back. She blames the whole incident on neglect and malnutrition. One still does not know whether Sarhthi's wife could have been saved, had timely medical attention been available!

When one looks at the status of primary education, one finds the situation worse than ever. In most of the villages studied, there was no school. Except for the village of Kukudagad, primary schools were located atleast one and a half kms. From the villages studied. This often discouraged young children from attending, and even those children who did go, were quite irregular. In several instances, the schools themselves did not function properly, and the masters were irregular.


PRESENT LAND TYPE MAP OF VILLAGE TILI
N
S

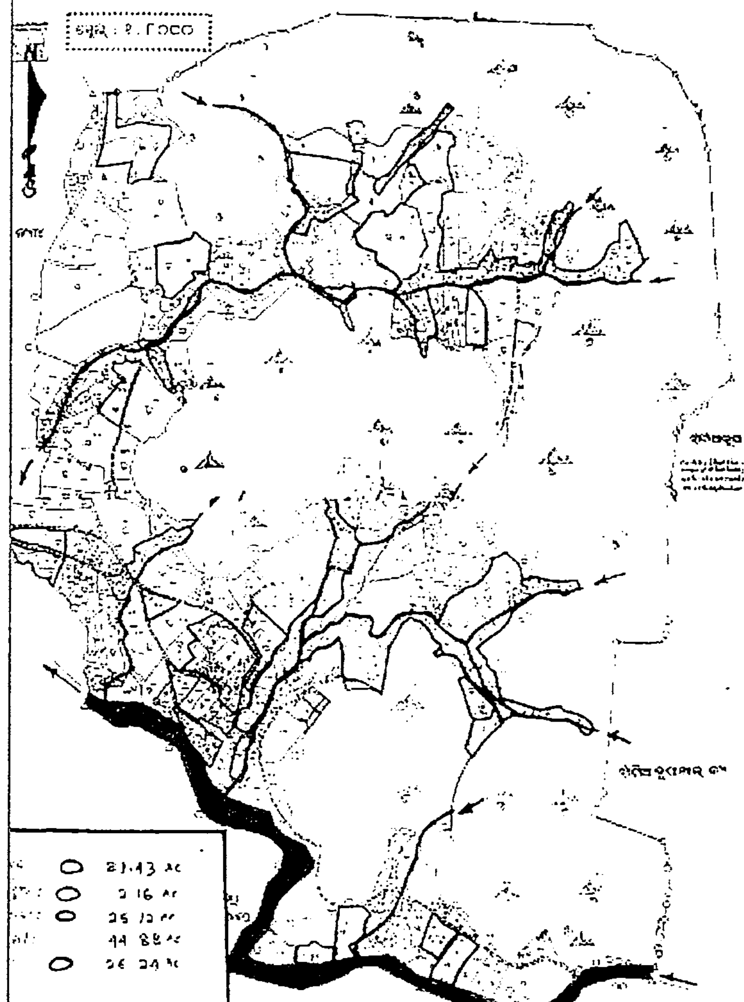
In the case of Metaguda, the closest primary school was also in Panasgandhi. The school was closed, and even the children of Panasgandhi did not receive their mid-day meal from the school.

## Status of Women

Like in any peasant community women play a crucial role in the economy. Theirs is the task of food processing, cooking, bringing up the children, and contributing to agricultural activities. Women also take part in wage labour activities. Women's work starts early in the morning by 4.00am with the grinding of ragi. Their's is a life of constant physical toil, and it takes a toll on their health condition. The health of most women deteriorates after marriage, and they point out that they have aged much faster after marriage. However, there is little health care for women in the villages. Apart from the overall lack of health care available for tribal villages, women also suffer, because of the immense physical pressure they are always under. In the villages, women complained that they could not even take a day off from their work. Only on the rare occasions when they went to ther parental village, could they relax they said. Within the household economy , women play a fairly active role, taking more or less equal part in the economic activities. However, domestic violence, and the threat of domestic violence subdues women quite often. Marriages are also more easy on the tribal women. If a woman so chooses, she can walk out of married life, and choose another partner. Women are also accepted back in her parental home if she is widowed.

Despite the relatively greater freedom that tribal women enjoyed, they play little role in decision making processes within the village or within a Panchayat. Men are aware of Gram Sabhas, and participate in Gram Sabha and Pali Sabha meetings, however, very few women went to such meetings. There were differing perceptions that women had on such participation. In the villages in Thuamulrampur, and Malkangiri, women were surprised when they were informed that they also had a right to participate in such meetings, and could raise their voice. Some women repeatedly asked us on this point, as if assuring themselves that we were telling the truth. In other instances, especially in the villages of Gajapati, women had a negative experience. They felt that they were never given a proper hearing. They tell us to keep quiet, when we speak in the Pali Sabha they said, and felt that it was no point going.

# CROPPING PATTERN: VILLAGE KUKUDAGAD



Women also get very little representation in the Government programmes. Even where, because of specific targeting, women are selected, women play little role in the selection, and become aware of the selection only after the sanction is finalised. Very often they are cheated in the financial dealings, as authorities often force the men who accompany them to keep away. In all wage labour work, women are paid at least Rs.5/- less than the men. Women seldom migrate, as the burden of taking care of the household falls primarily on their shoulders. Migration of men, often places undue pressure on the women, as there is no body to share the work. In many instances, women are forced to take loans when the men are not there to get the agricultural work done on time. Thus, much of the money that is earned during the migration period just gets used up in the repayment of loans. The entire family is also affected, when young men who could have supported the family leave and migrate for 4 to 6 months. Often came back with very little cash, and women felt cheated not only because of the high expectations, but much more because of the hardships they had to suffer managing the house single-handedly.

The greatest disadvantage that girls and women suffer is the lack of education. In Kukudagad, the women took special responsibility to send the children to school. Despite women taking the initiative for education in the village of Kukudagadh, only 12 girls and 38 boys attended school. When questioned, women responded that the girls were unwilling to attend. This could be an apparent reason, but the real reason we observed was that in most households, girls were habitually engaged in work, and there was little pressure or incentive for them to attend school, whereas, in the case of boys, there was much more pressure from the parents' side for attending school. In Ayodakaransahi, 18 girls and 18 boys were enrolled in the DPEP school which was about ½ km away. But because of the pressure of work, only 5 to 6 girls attended regularly, whereas amongst the boys, 12 were regular school goers. In Pusghati village, all the children attended the alternative school run by Agragamee, however, after the primary stage, the boys were sent to residential schools outside, whereas girls were forced to discontinue.

It is also most regrettable that women representatives in the Panchayats, Wards, and Panchayat Samities are unable to assert themselves to any significant extent. The fact is also that those who do assert have a very

difficult time. we take this opportunity of portraying briefly the situation of the x-Panchayat Samiti Chairman of Thuamulrampur, Kiamani Nayak.

## Welfare programmes

The most dismal performance was that of delivery of welfare services like the ICDS. With the exception of Kukudagad, we found that even the ICDS rations were not reaching the villages. In Kukudagad the Anganwadi worker stayed in the village, and used to deliver the dry rations to the families. However, the supply of rations is not regular, and varies from month to month. It was not possible to determine where the mistake lay, as the rations were lifted from the Block, 30kms away, and the worker told the people she lifted as much as was issued to her. In several of the villages the team found children in severe stages of malnutrition, but, despite the provisions, the children were not referred for special treatment. The rations of Ayodakaransahi were being sold in Rayagada by the Anganwadi worker. The supervisor apprehended her, and threatened to book her in a case. The people of Ayodakaransahi were called as witness. But by the time, the worker had already managed to issue threats, and the people evidenced that she gave supplies regularly. Very often, the job of Anganwadi worker is given to a women from a politically influential family. The result is that people are afraid to check her misdeeds, and keep quiet.

The overall political situation in the tribal regions is manipulated by a handful of non-tribal powerbrokers in most of the tribal regions. Few people dare to oppose the monopolistic controls that these people have over the processes of administration and governance in the tribal regions. The political representative who do come to power are controlled by these elites or can do little to oppose them. An illustrative case is that of the Doma Majhi of Kanarpass. Kanarpass along with Durmusi village which together form one ward had unanimously decided that Doma would be their ward member. However, Doma was not the Sarpanch's choice. Doma went to check whether his name was in the voter's list. Thrice, the Sarpanch assured him without showing the list, that his nam was included in the list. When Doma went to file his nominations on the last day, however, he found his na,e was not there on the voter list. and that he could not stand for election. The whole of Kanarpass does not find a place in the voter's list.

Income from Different Minor Forest Produce

| Sl. | Villages | Tamarind | | Bamboo | | Br. St. | | Mrms. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F.C | Rate | F.C | Rate | F.C | Rate | F.C | Rate |
| 1 | A. Karansahi | 34 | 3 | 7 | 15 | 30 | 2.5 | - | - |
| 2 | Tilli | 3 | 1.50 | - | - | .15 | 10 | - | - |
| 3 | Barba | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4. | Tamasingh | 14 | 2.00 | 2 | 25 | - | - | - | - |
| 5. | Kanarpas | 35 | 2.00 | 35 | 35 | 60 | 5.00 | 15 | 10 |
| 6 | Tikilipadar | 11 | 1.50 | 8 | 20 | 45 | 5 | 2 | 74 |
| 7. | Kolloba | 45.4 | 2.00 | 11 | 2.00 | - | - | 4.55 | 60 |
| 8 | Rankuda | 44 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 65 |
| 9. | Metaguda | 29.17 | 2 | 06 | 25 | 2.08 | 5 | - | - |
| 10. | Ranginiguda | - | - | 20 | 20 | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | Pushghati | 35 | 1.50 | 22 | 10 | - | - | - | - |
| 12. | Kukudagada | - | - | - | - | 28 | 10 | | - |

Explanations: F.C : Per Family Collection; Br. Stks. : Broom Sticks;
Mrms: Mushrooms

Contd.....

Income from Different Minor Forest Produce

| Sl. | Villages | Mango | | Mohulo | | Tollo | | Others | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F.C | Rate | F.C | Rate | F.C | Rate | F.C | Rate |
| 1 | A. Karansahi | - | - | 50 | 3 | 17 | 2.50 | 25 | 10 |
| 2 | Tilli | - | - | 3.08 | 3 | 0.77 | 2.50 | .25 | - |
| 3 | Barba | 16 | 2 | 10.2 | 1.50 | 6 | 2.50 | - | - |
| 4. | Tamasingh | 15 | 2.00 | 14 | 1.25 | 10 | 2.50 | 15 | No |
| 5. | Kanarpas | 15 | 2.80 | 26 | 2.50 | 12 | 2.50 | 12 | 4.50 |
| 6 | Tikilipadar | 85 | 2 | 30 | 1.50 | 15 | 2.50 | 19.50 | 2.50 |
| 7. | Kolloba | 4.55 | 2.50 | 13 | 3.00 | 140 | 3 | 7 | 5 |
| 8 | Rankuda | 8 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 15 | 3 | - | - |
| 9. | Metaguda | 1.5 | 2 | 0.05 | 2.50 | 5 | s.c | 2.1 | 30 |
| 10. | Ranginiguda | 100 | 3 | 16 | 3 | 25 | 03 | 40 | 2 |
| 11 | Pushghati | - | - | 30 | 3 | 12.3 | 4 | 1.15 | - |
| 12. | Kukudagada | - | - | - | - | - | - | 17.61 | 2.00 |

**Explanations: F.C : Per Family Collection; Br. Stks. : Broom Sticks;**
**Mrms: Mushrooms**

## Agriculture & Natural Resources

Most of the tribal communities in the Southern Districts practise shifting cultivation. The cultivation is highly labour intensive with low returns. This calls for extensive areas to be brought under cultivation. With the result that increasing area is exposed to erosion, and recovery of natural vegetation is very slow, and in places which are overstressed, the rock outcrop is exposed, and the top soil is completely lost. Options to this are very few. In the Kashipur Block, a settlement of upland was taken up under the IFAD programme. However, even though more than a 100 villages were covered under this programme, this has hardly lead to any regeneration of forest cover, as the cultivation on fragile hill-slopes provide very little returns.

In Rayagada Block, Gajapati District, people clear their 'Bagada' for a three year period. After an annual cropping for three years, the land is left fallow. The fallow period varies from 5 to 7 years depending on the regeneration, as also on the economic pressure on the community. This is the usual pattern in most shifting cultivation regions, with small variations in the cultivation period, as also in the kind of crops grow. Very often, shifting cultivation patches are brought under mixed crops which include paddy, and vegetables like beans and gourds, and minor millets.

The most fascinating example of cultivation is in the Lailai Panchayat of Rayagada Block. Here, people have terraced entire hill slopes and tap the seasonal hill streams to grow paddy and ragi. This terracing has been done over the generations by putting cross-bunds on the slopes on either side of the hill streams, and allowing the soil to stabilise. These lands are single cropped annually and provide about 7 to 8qtls of paddy per acre. This may not be the optimum for grain production, but the fact remains that in a hilly terrain, the people of the Saura community have developed an alternative to shifting cultivation. Such options as these need to be studied, and one needs to look at initiatives and innovations of the local tribal communities to get a thorough understanding.

Tribal regions have other problems, apart from shifting cultivation. Most of the settled cultivation is in the valley bottom land that has been terraced for paddy. In most regions, even though the soil in this layer retains moisture, there is only single cropping, with fairly good annual yields. However, even this is jeopardised in times of excessive rains

when land slides destroy huge tracts of valley bottom land, and Government compensation is highly inadequate to clear it once again for cultivation. Ofcourse, this problem is aggravated by the increasing areas being brought under shifting cultivation, but then, the tribal farmer has little options, as there is little low land that the tribal commands. Most of it has already passed into the hands of the non-tribals.

If one looks at the forests, then the situation is just as alarming. Forests are being fast denuded by the tribals themselves due to lack of options. Many of them are forced to sell firewood for a livelihood. A number of minor forest produce (MFP) are collected and sold by the tribal people. But, the exploitative market system deprives the tribal communities from benefit. We found that in some cases, tribal families had taken loans for processing and selling forest products, but the loans were outstanding as they could not find a market that offered them viable prices. The systems of exploitation through wrong weights and measures is well known. There are other problems too because of the remoteness of the tribal villages, and the few competitors for these products which do have a high value outside, the tribal is forced to sell it at the terms demanded by the traders. This situation is further aggravated by dams, as entire Panchayats get cut off from normal market routes. Atleast in the areas where such projects have come up, it is imperative that the Government intervenes with a constructive market support to the tribal communities to check exploitation.

# DISTRICT MAPS, SHOWING STUDY AREA

● - Selected G.P.

□ - Selected Block

# 5. THE STUDY AREA

## 1. Introduction

The study area is six blocks in four districts, including Gajapati, Kalahandi, Rayagada and Malkangiri chosen on the basis of backwardness ranking in the Government of Orissa report, "Report of the Committee on the Constitution of Separate Development Board in Orissa". A perusal of the report showed that of the 6 most backward blocks 4 were in Gajapati. Eventually ta king into consideration reasons of parity, 3 blocks were selected from Gajapati, and others, one each from the districts of Rayagada, Kalahandi, and Malkangiri.

Of these districts, Rayagada and Malkangiri which are also part of the erstwhile undivided Koraput district are completely fifth Schedule District, while Gajapati and Kalahandi have some tahsils under the Fifth Schedule. Except for Gajapati, all other districts come under the KBK area. Two villages were selected in each of these Blocks, to provide a comparative picture. The following description with facts and figures represents the situation as it was during the time of the study.

## 2. The Districts In Brief

### GAJAPATI DISTRICT

Gajapati district has been named after Maharaja Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deb, the Ex-Raja Sahib of Paralakhemundi estate (the 1st Prime Minister of Orissa State), who is remembered for his contribution in formation of a separate Orissa province. He was the direct descendant of the historic dynasty of the Gajapati kings who ruled Orissa for more than seven centuries. Formerly part of Ganjam, Gajapati became a separate district in 1992, with the headquarters in Parlakhemundi.

The Districts: At a Glance:

| | Gajapati (1) | Kalahandi (2) | Malkangiri (3) | Rayagada (4) | Orissa (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Area and Population (Administrative Structure of the State)** | | | | | |
| Name of sub-Division | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 58 |
| Name of Tahasil | 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 171 |
| No. of PS | 10 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 464 |
| No. of CD Block | 7 | 13 | 7 | 11 | 314 |
| No. of Gram-panchyat | 129 | 273 | 108 | 171 | 6234 |
| No. of Municipality.Corpn. | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 35 |
| No. of NACs | 17 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 68 |
| No. of OG | - | - | - | 2 | 62 |
| No. of Town with CT | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 31 |
| **Area and Population (Administrative Structure of the State)** | | | | | |
| Inhabited Villages | 1512 | 2099 | 979 | 2467 | 47529 |
| Un-habited Villages | 107 | 137 | 66 | 200 | 3820 |
| Total | 1619 | 2236 | 1045 | 2667 | 51349 |
| Total | 111405 | 320624 | 109483 | 190381 | 7738065 |
| No. of household Rural | 100306 | 299942 | 102076 | 165257 | 6618547 |

| | Gajapati | Kalahandi | Malkangiri | Rayagada | Orissa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| No. of household Urban | 1099 | 20682 | 7407 | 25124 | 1119518 |
| **Area and Population (Area, Density and Decadal Growth rate of Population in different district)** | | | | | |
| Geographical Area in sq.Kms | 4325 | 7920 | 5791 | 7073 | 155707 |
| Total Population - 1999 Census | 454708 | 1130903 | 422326 | 713984 | 31659736 |
| Total Population - 2001 Census | 518837 | 1335494 | 504198 | 831109 | 36804660 |
| Decadal Growth rate (1991 - 2000) | 14.10 | 18.09 | 19.39 | 16.40 | 16.25 |
| Density Per sq KM 2001 Census | 120 | 169 | 87 | 118 | 236 |
| **Area and Population (Population and Sex ratio in different district)** | | | | | |
| Sex Ratio (Females per'000 Males) | 1031 | 1001 | 997 | 1028 | 972 |
| Total Rural Population (Persons) | 465949 | 1235275 | 469582 | 715702 | 31287422 |
| Total Rural Population (Male) | 228862 | 615612 | 234614 | 351158 | 15748970 |
| Total Rural Population (Female) | 237087 | 619663 | 234968 | 364544 | 15538452 |
| **Area and Population (Population and Sex ratio in different district)** | | | | | |
| Urban Population (Persons) | 52888 | 100219 | 34616 | 115407 | 5517238 |
| Urban Population (Male) | 26561 | 51914 | 17893 | 58634 | 2911600 |
| Urban Population (Female) | 26327 | 48305 | 16723 | 56773 | 2605638 |
| **Area and Population (Sex wise Literacy rate in different district)** | | | | | |

| | Gajapati | Kalahandi | Malkangiri | Rayagada | Orissa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Literacy rate (Persons) | 41.26 | 45.94 | 30.53 | 36.15 | 63.08 |
| Literacy rate (Male) | 54.71 | 62.66 | 40.14 | 48.18 | 75.35 |
| Literacy rate (Female) | 28.42 | 29.28 | 20.91 | 24.56 | 50.51 |
| **Area & Population** **(District wise Population of Orissa with S.T. & S.C. & their Percentage to Total Population 2001 Census)** | | | | | |
| Total Population | 518837 | 1335494 | 504198 | 831109 | 36804660 |
| S.T Population | 263476 | 382573 | 289538 | 463418 | 8145081 |
| % of S.T. Population | 50.78 | 28.65 | 57.43 | 55.76 | 22.13 |
| S.C. Population | 38928 | 236019 | 107654 | 115665 | 6082063 |
| % of S.C. Population | 7.50 | 17.67 | 21.35 | 13.92 | 16.53 |
| **Medical and family Welfare** **(Number of Beds available in different Allopathic Medical Institutions in Orissa under state Government)** | | | | | |
| Medical Collage Hospital | - | - | - | - | |
| District Head Quarters Hospital | 91 | 145 | 75 | 69 | |
| Sub-Divisional Hospital | - | 45 | - | - | |
| Community Health Centre | 41 | 124 | 92 | 110 | |
| Primary Health Centre & PHC (New) | 24 | 54 | 34 | 36 | |

| | Gajapati | Kalahandi | Malkangiri | Rayagada | Orissa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Other Govt. Hospital | 36 | 123 | 85 | 10 | |
| **Total** | **199** | **491** | **286** | **225** | |
| **Medical and family Welfare (Number of Allopathic Medical Institution in Orissa under state Government)** | | | | | |
| Medical College District Hospital | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Sub-Divisional Hospital | - | 1 | - | 1 | |
| Other Hospital | 2 | 5 | 4 | 2 | |
| Community Health Center | 5 | 10 | 5 | 5 | |
| Primary Heath Centre | | | | | |
| Primary Heath Centre (New) | | | | | |
| Medical Health Unit | | | | | |
| **Medical and Family Welfare (No. of Ayurvedic Hospital, Beds available and patients treated in Orissa under State Govt.)** | | | | | |
| Number of Hospital | - | - | - | - | |
| Number of Dispensaries | 4 | 18 | 4 | 15 | |
| Number of Doctor | 4 | 18 | 4 | 15 | |
| Number of Nurse | - | - | - | - | |
| Number of Beds available | - | - | - | - | |

| | Gajapati (1) | Kalahandi (2) | Malkangiri (3) | Rayagada (4) | Orissa (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Power (Villages Electrified in Orissa)** | | | | | |
| No. of Villages electrified during the year. | 1 | 8 | | | |
| Up to the end of the year | 736 | 1315 | 367 | 965 | - |
| Percentage of villages electrified | 50.4 | 63.6 | 41.8 | 39.5 | - |
| **Classification of forest area by Legal status in Orissa** | | | | | |
| Reserve Forest | 416.89 | 1449.03 | 352.44 | 771.62 | - |
| Area in Sq.Kms. Total Govt. Forest | 2468.98 | 2538.01 | 3355.88 | 2812.33 | - |
| **Number of Registered Reporting Factories, Value of Output Value added by manufacture and persons employed in organised sectors in Orissa.** | | | | | |
| No. of Registered Reporting Factories | 2 | 28 | 6 | 26 | - |
| Persons employed (In nos.) Workers | 6 | 1052 | 81 | 3250 | - |
| Persons employed (In nos.) Total | 13 | 1392 | 92 | 4240 | - |
| Gross Value of Output (Rs.in Lakhs) | 56 | 4345 | 401 | 27445 | - |
| Net Value added by Manufacture (Rs. in Lakhs) | 7 | (-)193 | (-28) | 4287 | - |
| **Number of Primary School, Teachers and Students In Orissa** | | | | | |
| No. of Primary School | 937 | 1705 | 898 | 1482 | - |
| No. of Teacher in primary school (Male) | 1043 | 2703 | 1312 | 2024 | - |

| | Gajapati | Kalahandi | Malkangiri | Rayagada | Orissa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| No. of Teacher in primary school (Female) | 294 | 679 | 378 | 455 | - |
| No. of Teacher in primary school (Total) | 1337 | 3382 | 1690 | 2479 | - |
| No. of Teacher in primary school (SC) | 152 | 473 | 503 | 286 | - |
| No. of Teacher in primary school (ST) | 501 | 457 | 262 | 502 | - |
| **Education (Number of Middle Schools, Teachers and Students In Orissa)** | | | | | |
| No. of Middle school | 104 | 356 | 108 | 188 | - |
| No. of Teachers in Middle school (Male) | 329 | 1355 | 325 | 475 | - |
| No. of Teachers in Middle school (Female) | 160 | 347 | 91 | 749 | - |
| No. of Teachers in Middle school (Total) | 489 | 1702 | 416 | 624 | - |
| No. of Teachers in Middle school (SC) | 46 | 138 | 76 | 28 | - |
| No. of Teachers in Middle school (ST) | 74 | 63 | 31 | 44 | - |
| **Education (Number of Secondary School, Teacher & Students In Orissa)** | | | | | |
| No. of Secondary schools | 63 | 245 | 40 | 60 | - |
| No. of Teacher in secondary school (Male) | 302 | 1583 | 314 | 459 | - |
| No. of Teacher in secondary school (Female) | 89 | 353 | 94 | 181 | - |
| No. of Teacher in secondary school (Total) | 391 | 1936 | 408 | 640 | - |
| No. of Teacher in secondary school (SC) | 14 | 152 | 71 | 17 | - |

| | Gajapati (1) | Kalahandi (2) | Malkangiri (3) | Rayagada (4) | Orissa (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of Teacher in secondary school (ST) | 5 | 70 | 3 | 9 | - |
| **Education (Number of General College in Orissa)** | | | | | |
| No. of Govt. Colleges | 2 | 4 | 1 | | |
| No. of Added Colleges | 44 | 19 | 4 | 13 | |
| **Total** | **54** | **23** | **5** | **13** | - |
| **No. of Homoeopathic Hospitals, Beds available & Patient treated in Orissa** | | | | | |
| No. of Hospital | - | - | - | - | - |
| No. of Dispensaries | 3 | 14 | 3 | 10 | - |
| No. of Beds available | - | - | - | - | - |
| Police and Crime (Number of Police Station, Outposts and Fire Station in Orissa) | | | | | |
| No. of Police Station | 10 | 12 | 11 | 12 | |
| No. of Mahila Police Station | - | - | - | - | |
| No. of Total Police Station | 10 | 12 | 11 | 12 | |
| No. of Beat House outposts and Town out posts | 9 | 24 | 11 | 15 | |
| No. of Fire Station | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | |

**Notes:** 1 - Gajapati, 2 - Kalahandi, 3 - Malkangiri, 4 - Rayagada, 5 - Orissa

### Geographical Situation:

The district lies between 18.45° East to 19.40° West latitude and 85.48° North to 84.27° South longitude. It is bordered by Ganjam and Andhra Pradesh on the East, Rayagada on the West, and Ganjam and Phulbani in the Noth, and Andhra Pradesh on the South.

## KALAHANDI DISTRICT

The present District of Kalahandi was in ancient times a part of South Kosalas. It was princely state. After Independence of the Country, merger of princely state took place on 1st January, 1948. The princely state of Kalahandi was merged in Orissa alongwith other princely states on 1st November, 1949. Subsequently, in 1962, Kashipur Police Station was taken out from this District and merged with Koraput.

### Geographical Location

Kalahandi district occupies the South-Western portion of Orissa and is situated between 19 degree 3' N and 21 degree 5' N latitude and 82 degree 30 E and 83 Degree 74' E langitude. It is bounded in the North by the District of Balangir and Nawapara, on the South by the District of Rayagada, on the West by the District of Nawarangpur and Raipur (Chhatisgarh) and on the East by the District of Rayagada and Boudh. It extends over an area of 8,364.89 Sq.K.Ms. The District Headquarters is at Bhawanipatna town which stands almost to the Eastern border.

## RAYAGADA DISTRICT

Rayagada, which was part of the undivided Koraput, became a separate district in 1992. It is bordered by Kandhmal in the North, Kalahandi in the Northwest west, Koraput, and Andhra in the South, and Ganjam in the East. This region went to Bahamanis when Mukund Dev was defeated at Gohera Tikiri in 1519. Then, it was under Nandapur Kingdom for brief period of 47 years. Biswambar Dev who was defeated and killed by Hasin Khan was perhaps the third king installed at Rayagada. Still, the Sati Kunda Goddess Majhi Ghairani and the mudfort around it speaks much about its evidence. In subsequent years it was under Bobilli, a Tahasil of Vijayanagaram. Later, during the English regime, Rayagada was covered under the Jeypore Zamindari, which continued till

Independence. The District is resource rich, with 26 reporting industries, and medium and major irrigation projects. The District has two subdivisions, Gunupur, and Rayagada, and 11 administrative Blocks.

### 3. The Blocks

## GUMMA BLOCK; GAJAPATI DISTRICT

### Background

Gumma Block in Gajapati District has a topography of high relief, compared to even the other Blocks in the study area, almost all of which happen to be in hilly upland regions. Several village settlements are located on the hill tops, or half-way up hilly slopes with difficult access. Yet, the block shows relatively higher rates of literacy, and There are 19-Gram Panchayats in Gumma block. The total number of ward in this block is 172, the total number of villages is 139 and the total number revenue villages 128.

### Demography

The total population of Gumma block is 54520. Out of the total population the percentage of male and female population is 48.04 % and 51.95 % respectively. The total S. T. population of this block is 38475 and their percentage is 70.50%. The total S.C. population of this block is 2648 and their percentage is 4.85%. Out of them1335 is male and 1313 is female. The total general population of this block is 13397.and their percentage is 24.57 %.

### Demographic Structure of Gumma Block

| S.T | % | S.C | % | G.C | % | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38475 | 70.50 | 24648 | 4.85 | 13397 | 24.57 | 54528 |

### Educational Facilities

The literacy rate is very poor. The female and male literacy rate is 35% and 14.7% respectively. There are 122 D. P. E. P schools, 9 M. E Schools, 2 high schools, 1 Ashram schools, 6 Seba Shrama , 16 P. S. H schools in the Block.

### Educational Institutions

| D.P.E.P School | M.E shram | Seva Viadya -laya | Abasika High School | Govt High School | Private High | Ashram School | P.S.H | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 122 | 09 | 06 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 02 | 01 | 16 |

### Health Care facilities

There is one primary health centre which is situated at the Block head quarters. The other sub-centres are practically defunct, with no doctors or any facilities. ANMs have a difficult time covering the villages in the difficult terrain of the Block, and visits to the villages are few and far between. Thus, even the medicines provided by the government do not reach the sick, when needed. There are 93 ICDS Centres in the Block, which function irregularly.

### Market facilities

The majority of the villages do not have road communication. They are remote, and can only be reached on foot. Thus, people also find it difficult to access markets for their products, or even to buy everyday commodities. Petty traders thus have a monopoly, and subject the local community to much exploitation. Most of the trade is in barter form. Weekly markets provide an outlet in the Panchayat headquarters. However, for the more interior villages, even these are accessed with difficulty. The District headquarters of Parlakhemundi is the major trade centre for most of the villages.

### Communication facilities

Communication facilities in most of the villages are not good. The villages are found mainly on hilly tracts. Due to lack of communication to the villages the people face lots of problems during the rainy seasons. About 41 villages have got communication facilities, which are, connected to the main road.

## MOHANA BLOCK; GAJAPATI DISTRICT

### Introduction

One of the most backward blocks in the tribal district of Gajapti, Mohana has played host to Tibetan refugees since the early 60s. Ranked 3rd in

the Governemtn of Orissa's backwardness ranking of Blocks, Mohana is bordered by Daringbadi Block of Phulbani District and Suruda in the North, Udayagiri and Digapahandi Blocks in the South, and Padampur and Patrapur Blocks in the East and the west respectively. The tribal population, as well as the overall socio-economic and political situation of Mohana has been affected by the resettlement of Tibetan refugees in the early 60s in Chandragiri. Tibetans have been settled in 5 Panchayats, and amongst other things were provided agricultural lands and loans to help them settle down. While the national and international attention focused on the plight of these refugees, and aid and resources were poured in to resettle them, the tribal community continued in its poverty stricken state. Today, the Tibetan communities provides a startling contrast to the rest of the region, with well maintained colonies, having all amenities, including schools, hospitals, colleges.There is a resentment against the Tibetan community for the quantity of aid that has been given to them, even though the tribal families around the settlement depend on them almost in the same way as they would depend on a local moneylender for timely loans, underpayed, but easily accessed employment, etc.

Apart from the Tibetan refugee colonies, Mohana in itself is an underdeveloped block, with poorly developed communication, health and market facilities. It has had its share of displacement by the Harabhangi Irrigation project. This project has not only displaced nearly a thousand families, but also cut off certain Panchayats from easy access to the Block headquarters, and facilities therein. These villages however are never considered for any kind of compensation.

## Education

Mohana has a literacy rate of 25% (37% male, and 12% female). The SI of schools admits that there are several villages in the Block with no facilities for even primary education

184 villages have U.P. schools. There are 12 residential schools, 3 M.E. schools, 14 child labour schools, and 3 high schools, and 14 Alternate Education schools under DPEP, as far as Government educational facilities are concerned. Apart from this, there are 4 private schools which include a Saraswati Sisu Mandir, 2 missionary schools, and 1 school for the physically handicapped.

## Health & Nutrition

The health and health care scenario is even more dismal. With just 1 Public Health Centre, 6 Additional Public Health Centres, 24 ANMs and 1 mobile health centre, a vast majority of the villages are still cut off from any semblance of modern day health care. People in the villages are discouraged by the long distances they have to carry patients to access health care. In addition to this, the medicines are not free.

Visible signs of malnourishment continue to persist in the villages and the 12 Anganwadi centres and 78 sub-centres are quite inadequate to meet the needs of the people, riddled as they are with inefficiency and mismanagement.

## Market & Credit Facilities

There is TDCC purchasing centre in the Block headquarters, and 70 retail shops under the PDS. There is only one daily market located in the headquarters again. The benefits of the rich forest produce of the region are primarily appropriated by the traders.

With two banks, the United Bank of India, and the Canara Bank operating in the Block, there are ample opportunities for availing credit. Yet, people still prefer to go to the traditional institutions. On the other hand, those who have taken loans from the banks do not seem interested to re-pay the loans. 60% of the loans have not been re-paid. This is also a major complaint. Later on in this chapter, the reasons for all this shall be explored further.

The Banks are at the moment promoting loans under various Government schemes they say, but the major activity seems to be promotion of SHGs. The Canara Bank is working with 34 SHGs, while the United Bank of India is working with 140 SHGs presently according to the managers.

## Government Programmes

Several programmes and activities of the Government are being implemented in the Block, including a range of employment generation programmes like the Employment Assurance Scheme, Rural Connectivity Programme, the Food For Work Programme, the Jawahar Gram

Swarojgar Programme; etc. nearly 4 crores has been spent on just the EAS, more than 5 crores on the JGSY, all told, more than Rs.13 crores has been spent on different employment and welfare schemes. There is hardly any visible impact of this development in the Block.

## RAYAGADA BLOCK; GAJAPATI DISTRICT

## RAYAGADA

### Geographical Location

Rayagada block is situated in the Southern part of Gajapati district. It is surrounded by hills and forest. In the South Eastern and North Eastern part it borders Nuagada, and in South and S.E, it borders Paralakhemundi and Srikulam district of Andhra Pradesh respectively.

### Political Division

Rayagada block divided into 18 Panchayats and 291 villages of which 14 are situated in hill area, and rest are in foothills. S.Kordasingh is one of the new Panchayat of this block. Lailai and Panigondo are the most interior, and S. Kordasingh and Mallaba are considered as advanced Panchayats of the block.

### Demography

The total population of the block is 70430. Out of which, 35095 are male and 35335 female. The number of SC and ST population of this district is 55625 and 1802 respectively, and the number of SC and ST population of this district is 55625 and 1802 respectively. The number of families of this block is 9272, Out of 7432, 50967 of the total population are illiterate. There are many ethnic groups seen in this block ie saure, Pano, Dombo, Karans, etc. the numerically majority community is the Saura tribal.

### Educational Facilities

There are 6 major types of schools situated in this area. The lists of government schools are seen in this area are mentioned bellow:

| Sl. No. | Types of the school | Nos. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Primary School | 138 |
| 2 | U.P. School | 11 |
| 3 | High School | 08 |
| 4 | Seva Ashrama | 11 |
| 5 | Deploid School | 15 |
| 6 | DPEP | 27 |

### Health cares facilities

There is an only one government hospital in the block ie at the blockhead quarter Rayagada. There are 59 ANMs appointed for this block. Due to not availability of communication facilities, villagers cannot take patients to hospitals. For government treatment they depends on Paralakhemundi, Rayagada hospitals. There are total 93 ICDS centers established in this block. Out of which, 62 are situated in hill villages. A private nursing home at Narayanpur provides much more reliable service.

### Communication Facilities

46 villages are connected with road facilities. Railway facility is totally unknown to the area. There are few buses running in this block. Rented trekker are a common mode of transport for foothill villages.

### Market Facility

Market facility is totally unknown to the hill village. Foothill villages, have one or two grocery shops. People go to Narayan pur, Rayagada, Jiranga and Paralakhemundi for marketing. However the local market locally called Hatt is preferred as the bater system still prevails there. The SC community plays an important role in trade and exchange at the village level.

### Postal and Banking facilities

There are two banks established in Rayagada block. Ie. Rusikulaya Gamaya Bank and Narayanpur, and State Bank of India at Rayagada.

They provide various development schemes for empowerment of the tribal people. i.e. Goat loan, bee-keeping etc. 12 village post offices service the entire block. However these are also seldom used facilities because of local people need not these facilities.

### Non governmental institutions

There are four major non governmental organizations working in this area ie SWWS, Gram Vikash, PREM PLAN and AWARE. Those institutions organized Night School, Kanya Ashram, hospitals etc. people are benefited by those facilities.

### Horticulture

The block is considered specially suitable for horticulture. The governmental has thus encouraged the tribal people to take up plantations of mango, banana, cashew, pineapple, papaya and others cash crops by providing grafts, suckers and other supports.

### Non governmental Organizations

There are 4 Non Governmental Organization working in the block viz. SWWS, Gram Vikash PREM plan and AWARE.

## THUAMULRAMPUR BLOCK; KALAHANDI DISTRICT

Thuamul Rampur block is situated in the southern most part of kalahandi district. It borders Kashipur Block of Rayagada District in the South East, Lanjigarh Block of Kalahandi in the north and Bhabanipatna in the West. It is at a distance of 72kms from the district head quarters of Bhabanipatna.

The Block has an uneven topography, with high relief provided by bauxite bearing plateaus in the south east, and inaccessible settlements, in the midst of forested tracts. Minimum maximum temperatures varry from 40 degrees Celsius in summer to below 4 degrees Celsius in winter. The annual average rainfall is over a period of 105 days, with a precipitation of over 1500mm in normal years.

River system: The major river system is the Indravati, with most of the smaller rivers and streams draining into it. The upper Indravati hydro-electric Project constructed across this river dams four major rivers in

the region, including the Podagad, Muran and Kapur, displacing more than 5000 families in 100 villages in the districts of Koraput, and Kalahandi.

The Block has 300 villages, with 264 revenue villages, and 39 hamlets and 195 wards, and 16 Gram PAnchayats. The total population of the Block as per 2001 census is 65726, with a sex ration of 1024. the literacy rate is 22.6%, making it the least literate Block in Kalahandi as also the whole of Orissa.

## Education

There are total 88 schools established in this area. Out of which 80 are primary schools, providing a coverage of 30% of the revenue villages, for primary schools. This is in itself a very poor coverage, but, given the fact, that a majority of these institutions suffer from highly irregular teacher attendance due to several reasons, including poor supervision, and complaints of teachers about the logistics of communicating etc., the primary education situation in the block is dismal.

| Sl.No. | Name of the school | Nos. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Primary school | 72 |
| 2 | U.P. school | 08 |
| 3 | High school | 06 |
| 4 | Sisu mandir | 01 |
| 5 | Walefare school | 01 |
| | **Total** | **88** |

## Healthcare facilities

Malaria prone, and remote, though the region is, the Block has only two Public Health Centres. A majority of the villages are thus denied any health care, as they can travel only on foot, and it could take a whole day to reach the PHC. High rates of mortality, and specially infant mortality are thus normal here. People are forced to fall back on the option of traditional health systems, which have their short comings. Communicable diseases like diarrhoea and scabies are also frequent occurrences. The ANMs are also not regular in visiting villages, and Panchayats. An option could be provision of vehicles for such remote Blocks, and more support for mobile health units.

## Hospitals

| Sl.No. | Name of the center | Numbers |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | PHC | 1 |
| 2 | DDC holders | 08 |
| 3 | AWC | 07 |
| 4 | SUB Centers | 08 |

## Communication facilities

Communication is a major problem for most of the villages in the Block. Many of them have been cut off from all facilities due to the damming of the Indravati River. People in the villages of Uturkhal and Nari have to cover a distance of 90kms to access the Block headquarters. With very pporly developed public transport and road communication facilities, this could take anything upto three days. People in this Block prefer to manage without the meagre government facilities.

## Government and Non Government Institutions:

## Postal and banking facilities

There are total 56 post offices, and the State Bank of India, with four branches. Few people however use these facilities, and then, it is primarily for sending letters. The majority of the tribal people also do not have the banking habit.

## Non Governmental Institutions

There are three non governmental organizations working in the Block: Agragamee, Gram Vikas, and Antodaya.

**Government Institutions:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Block Office | Thuamul rampur |
| Tahasil | Thuamul rampur |
| Primary Health Centre | Thuamul rampur |
| Additional Primary Health Centre | Mohulpatna |
| Policestation | Thuamul rampur |
| Police Outpost | Karlapat |

| | |
|---|---|
| Vetenary | Thuamul Rampur |
| Anganwadi Centres | 80 |
| Anganwadi Sudcenter | 81 |
| L.A.M.P.S | Thuamal rampur |
| High School | 5 |
| UP School | 72 |
| M.E. School | 10 |
| Sisu Sarmika School | 5 |
| Agriculteral Development Office | Thuamul rampur |
| Soilconversation Office | Thuamul rampur |
| Panchayat Office | 16 |

## KASHIPUR BLOCK; RAYAGADA DISTRICT

Kashipur Block was part of Kalahandi till 1960. subsequently, it was made part of Koraput District for administrative purposes, and then became a part of Rayagada District, after the division of Districts in 1992. Bordered by THuamulrampur Block of Kalahandi District on the North, and Dasmantpur and Lakhimpur Blocks of Korpuat District on the South and Southwest respectively, and by Singpur and Rayagada Blocks on the East, the Kashipur Block is coincidental with Kashipur Tahsil. It is home to Kondh Paraja and Jhodia Paraja tribes, and has 20 Gram Panchayats. The block is rich in mineral deposits, with ongoing quarrying of ferromanganese and graphite to supply nearby industries. It is also being eyed by several big corporations for the mining of bauxite from several of its bauxite rich plateaus. Its undulating topography has given rise to several river valleys which join the Indravati on one side, and the Nagavalli on the other.

Poverty alleviation programmes, including internationally funded projects have not improved income levels. Commercial plantations like coffee have been tried in this region with negative results, as the local communities have not had any benefits. Several coffee plantations have been reclaimed for shifting cultivation by the villagers as they could not market the produce.

The climate of this area is very cold as it is sitchuated at an altitude of 3000 feet. The majors scheduled tribes(Kandha, Paraja & Peng scheudle caste including Dhoba, Hadi, Pana and other backward castes are Teli,

Gouda, Khandayat, Sundi, Kumbhara. There are 412 Revenues village and 20 Gram Panchayats. Total population of Kashipur Block is 1,02,083 among them 63,565 tribals, 20,163 Harijan and 18,353 General and backward caste.

The infrastructure development and service delivery is also poor in the Block. The situation is further compounded by the poor implementation. In addition, the large area and difficult terrain make it difficult to reach several villages. This makes the situation acute specially in the area of health, where, even emergencies are left unattended.

**Population of Kashipur Block**

| Sl. No. | Adiavasi | Harijan | General & Backward caste | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 63,565 | 20,163 | 18,353 | 1,02,083 |

## Education

There are 117 primary schools 16 Upper primary, 4 High schools. The literacy rate is 10.56 percent people with male literacy at 17.651 male and 3.57 percent female. Another problem in that region is that, teachers are also not come to school regularly. That is why the student who came to school also are not able to get proper education.

## Health Facilities

138 Anganwadi centre, 5 P.H.C centre and One C.H.C centre are running. There are also 17 A.N.M centre. However it is the health functionaries rather than the doctors who attend to the patients even in the CHC of Kashipur. There are only two workers working in each health centre.

## Communication

One all weather road links the major Panchayat headquarters to Rayagada. However, the villages are very poorly connected.

## Market

Eight Panchayats of have weekly markets. There are only two main markets in Kashipur and Tikiri. Weekly markets in Kashipur, Sunger,

Dangasil, Chandragiri, Tikiri, Godibali, Gorakhpur and Bankam Panchayat sit on Wednesday, Thursday, Sunday, Friday, Saturday, Thursday, Monday and Tuesday respectively.

### Credit facilities and Govt. Programmes

The block has 3 S.B.I units, 2 K.P.G banks and one Micro bank. In this block you also one Post office, 21branch post office and a Vetenary hospital.

The B.P.L cardholders in this block are 24,582. People are getting 16 kg rice through this card. 215 people in this block have Annapurna cards and 2626 families have been included in Antardwaya Yojana and each of them are getting 25 kg rice.

### Details of other Wefare Programmes

Widow Pension- 4590

Handicapped pension- 283

Old age pension-2677

Government is doing these programmes.

### Voluntary organisations

Major voluntary organisation in the Block are Agragamee and Laxman nayak Society & Ama Sangathan. Their work of tribal development, and awareness generations has helped the tribal communities address many of their problems, and increased participation in Panchayati Raj, and Government programmes in general.

## KUDUMULUGUMA BLOCK, MALKANGIRI DISTRICT

### Brief Description of the Block

### Geographical Location

Kudumuluguma block comes under the Malkangiri district of Orissa. It is one of the most underdeveloped, and inhospitable blocks of the district, with the reservoirs of hdro-power projects like the Balimela, and the machkund cutting off several Panchayats from the Blcok and district headquarters, as also from facilities like markets, health care etc. The most important tribes are Kondha, Bonda, Sabara, Saura, Paraja in this Block.

The Geographical area of the block is 569.56 sq.km. Total number of villages is 256, of which 252 are inhabited.

## Demography

The total population of this block is 40,699. Out of them 20,508 is male and 20,191 are female. The ST percentage is 76.06% and 6.42% respectively.

## Rain fall

The annual rainfall of Malkangiri district recorded as 1521.8MM where as in Kudumuluguma block it is recorded as 1322.0MM

## Economic Profile

The local communities of tribes depend on Agriculture, Forest produce and shifting cultivation, with a conspicuous absence of government presence in terms of different programmes, and schemes like the ICDS, health, and primary education, or even employment generation. The poor communication facilities in the region further aggravates the situation.

With extreme paucity of employment opportunities created by forest department, EAS, block, panchayat the local tribals are victims of exploitation by money lenders and contractors. Majority of the wage work is through agricultural wage labour, at rates far below the prescribed minimum wages. Much of the indebtedness in the Block also arises out of hunger and food scarcity. Local tribal communities have lost significant amounts of land because of indebtedness.

Naxalite groups from Andhra Pradesh create a reign of terror in this block, though, this does not seem to have significantly checked exploitation by such groups as moneylenders and contractors.

## Forests

The total recorded forest area of the Kudumuluguma block is 17,020 Hect. It is a major source of livelihood, as for most tribal regions, and supplements upto nearly fifty percent of the tribal economy. However unchecked felling, and cross-border smuggling has caused much degradation of the forest lands, with consequent deterioration of tribal living standards.

### Educational facilities

Kudmulguma has 76 primary schools, 9 higher secondary schools and two high schools. School buildings are often in a dilapidated condition. Teachers are also more often absent, increasing the disinterest of the community in general and the children in particular in the educational system. In many cases, schools are located at distances of more than 3 to 4 kms from the tribal hamlets, and children have to ford torrents, and ravines to reach.

### Health Care Facilities

One community health centre, and sub-primary health centre provide the health care for the Block. These are ill equipped and poorly staffed, and do not really cater to the health needs of the local communities. Visits of health functionaries to the villages are also irregular and infrequent. The pre-school nutrition programme also faces similar problems in the Block. Anganwadi centres function in a dismal and sporadic manner, where the worker is almost always absent, and local communities just taking it as a scheme where food is distributed irregularly to the infants and toddlers.

### Other Welfare Schemes

The neglect and apathy of the government is apparent in these as well. As pointed out by the Sarpanch, Parkanmala Gram Panchayat, wrong enumeration has lead to the rich families getting BPL cards, and the poor getting APL cards. Thus, there is a whole section of deserving people deprived of even basic benefits. Migration to other states, and districts is often the only option that people have. Where

## 4. THE VILLAGES

**Village : BARBA**
**District : Gajapati**
**Block : Gumma**
**Panchayat : Namangad**

Barba is a small tribal village of Namangad Panchayat of Gajapati district of Orissa. The village is situated 15 k.m east of the district head quarters,

and 3 kms from the Panchayat. The village has a good tree cover, and a hilly terrain.

## Village History

The village got its name from the 'Bar' tree, which had attracted two Saura brothers more than 100 years back. They settled in and built their houses, and established the village. The place suited their preference, as it was on hilly terrain, and not close to other populated areas. According to the villagers, the Saura people prefer hilly and forested areas to settle down, since their livelihood is forest dependent.

The village did not have any cultivable land. Gradually, however, the Sauras, cleared small patches for agriculture, and started growing their food.

The people worked as bonded labour to the Parlakhemundi King, and were tortured and exploited by them. Their harvest used to be forcibly taken by the Gajapati rulers as revenue. Now, however the situation has changed, but there has been little improvement in the quality of life, as land degradation, and exploitative market forces deprive them of much of there income.

**Village TAMOSING**
**District Gajapati**
**Block Gumma**
**Panchayat : Trangada**

The village Tamosing which comes under Tarangad Panchayat of Gumma block in the Gajapati district of Orissa, is situated 24 k.m away from the district head quarter, 22 k.m distance from the block head quarter and 15 k.m distance from the Panchayat head qarter. The village is situated on the top of the hill and 5 k.m distance from the Atmajhra village. The village is covered with full of forest and mountain.

## Village History

Previously around 100 years ago Khunti community of Kumbhar castes inhabited the village. Villagers left the village as many of them died of a disease called **'Bakata'.** Subsequently, people belong to **Gomango** caste from Serang village came and decided to settle there. After a few

years another group called **Mandal** came to this village and settle there. All group settled and lived amicably.

Previously during the reign of kings and small time rulers like **Bisoi, Gosani** etc the innocent tribal were used to be exploited and tortured. Whatever the tribal produced were snatched away from them by the rulers. As the people were scared of the rulers they used to tolerate them.

25 years back there began a new phenomenon. Christianity entered into this region and the villagers were influenced by the religion. Initially only two people converted themselves into Christianity. Gradually the entire village was converted into Christianity. As per the elders of the village, because of superstition rituals in the Hindu region they used to expend a lot. In case of illness they used to sacrifice animals before the deity whereas in Christianity because of absence of rituals many people were attracted.

## Socio-Economic profile

Agriculture is the primary source of occupation of the village people. Cashew plantations also provide a significant income to the community. 5 families in the village are landless, the rest of the families have between l to 5 acres of land, except for two families, who have more than 5 acres.

Rice is the principal food of the village people. Apart from this they also consume a range of other millets, including ragi, kangu, jana etc. The better off families consume vegetables which they cultivate in their kitchen garden. The poor and medium class people face food problem more than six months in a year.

**Villages : RANKUDA AND KOLABA**
**Panchayat : Jeerango and Domadua**
**Block : Mohana**
**District : Gajapati**

## Introduction

Two villages studied in Mohana Block were Kolaba in Domadua Panchayat, and Rankuda in Jeerang Panchayat. These two villages provided a picture of contrast in terms of access and location. Yet,

there were several similarities that emerged in the overall socio-economic picture, as well. It would do well to examine the difference as well as the similarities to find out what could be a long term development approach for the tribal regions.

## Food Security & livelihood

The livelihood of the people in the two villages was a combination of shifting cultivation, and forests collections.Every family in Rankuda village has small or big land holdings ( ranging from 2-5 acres). Yet, the low yields from these land, render several families in the village dependent on wage labour. Rankuda village is close to the Tibetan settlement in Jirang, 3kms away. A dependence relationship between the tribal people and the Tibetan community has emerged over the years, which practically substitutes the relationship of the tribal with a local landlord. In addition to the land already allotted to them, the Tibetan community has encroached further land in the area, and are thriving with maize cultivation.

Despite, having some land, the monsoon months sea the people of Rankuda often without food stocks. It is during these months that they borrow heavily from the neighbouring Tibetan community, and also seek wage labour in their fields. Conversely, learning from the Tibetans, many of the tribals of Rankuda have also learnt maize cultivation, and it has become a staple diet in several tribal families.

Kolaba is quite removed from other non-tribal communities. The land holding in this village is much more skewed than in Rankuda. Only 7 of the 22 families in the village have cultivable land, out of which three families have more than 10 acres, including irrigated valley bottom land, where they cultivate paddy. These families are self-sufficient as far as food is concerned, unlike the rest of the 15 families. Amongst these 15, 4 families have 1.5 – 4 acres of up land, which is subjected to annual shifting cultivation. The rest of the families depend completely on shifting cultivation and wage labour work. The wage labour is provided by the families with large land holdings.the forests are also extensively used for timber and other minor forest produce which is sold to the non-tribal community.

Exploitation in the form of liquor traders from other villagers, loans from non-tribals etc continues, and lack of education further increases the problems. The rich minor forest produce are also similarly appropriated by local liquor vendors, who take the trees on lease.

## Government Programmes

The Government does not seem to have touched the remote village of Kolaba. They have not benefited from the FFW work, nor can they access welfare programmes like the ICDS programme, or the mid-day meal scheme. One person has studied in a nearby residential school. No programme of immunisation has taken place. Several families however, have been able to avail of loans upto Rs.10,000 for weaving palm leaf mats and leaf-plate stitching. However, the poor market facilities has lead to the collapse of their business, and now they are all defaulters. One of the 'beneficiaries' of the loan programmes, women were prioritised in this scheme, puts the whole thing in a nut shell: *Jinisha kini galle, miliba nahin; biki gale, sariba nahin:* if you go to buy some thing, you will not get it, but if you want to sell, nobody will buy it. The tribal community is almost always at the loosing end in the market economy. Health facilities are non-existent, and the people prefer by far to depend on local traditional systems.

The situation in the more connected Rankuda village, is however different, even if only slightly. The Anganwadi worker stays in the village, however food supplies have not been available for the last two months, the villagers complain. There is no primary school in the village. 10 boys go to school in Raypur village, 1.5kms. away. Problems, apart from having to help their parents, arise out of the poor communication between the two villages due to a stream, which becomes flooded during the monsoon season. Thus even the 10 boys who attend school, are not able to do so regularly. People from Rankuda also face several difficulties in accessing health facilities. The nearest health centre is 6kms. Away. The money involved, in buying medicines keeps them from accessing this facility as well. A Tibetan hospital also provides medical care, but the charges in this hospital are even higher, and so much out of the reach of the local tribals.

The orissa Government has settled land on a temporary basis in the name of the Tibetan refugees. A majority of the Tibetans now possess land, either, as a direct beneficiary of Government settlement, or by occupying Government land for which they have again got temporary pattas, or by mortgaging in the land of the local tribals. There is a stark contrast now.between the local population and the refugee settlements in terms of standard of living. While the refugee settlements have schools, hospitals, and are highly literate, with visible differences their pattern of living, in their patterns of clothes, the local tribal population is on the other hand as badly off as ever. The reasons for this need to be explored much more, if only to provide a viable patterns of development for a tribal area:

The Block has also seen the development of Medium Irrigation. The Harabhangi medium irrigation project provided employment to several people, but now, when the dam is over, the people are worse off than before, as they have lost their land, and are unable to find further employment.

## Migration

With high levels of poverty, migration is a common occurrence in Mohana. The young migrate most often, to Bombay, Andhra Pradesh. There is also lot of migration within the district, depending on the availability of work. Major reasons for this is. There is hardly any employment generated through Government programmes in the Block. The scheduled caste people migrate more. Migration is also along with Tibetan traders in Rankuda village to assist in the marketing of the goods produced by the Tibetans. These people mostly are from the Scheduled Caste Community.

## Agricutlure

Both villages cultivate mostly in the low lands. A wide variety of cereals are grown. In Rankuda village, where the Tibetans have settled, cropping patterns as also food patterns have changed, and the staple diet of the tribal people is also switching over to maize. The hybrid maize seems to have almost completely replaced the local variety in these regions. In other regions, a majority of the tribal people are sharecroppers. A massive programme of the FFW has been able to wean the people

away from shifting cultivation, there is a resurgence of forests on the hill slopes. However, the question remains what will happen when the FFW project period is over. The availability of agricultural land is low, the availability of Government employment is even lower.

**Village TIKILIPADAR**
**Panchayat : Mohulpatna**
**Block : Thuamulrampur**
**District : Kalahandi**

## Geographical

Tikilipadar village comes under Mohulpatna Gram Panchayat of Th. Rampur block of Kalahandi district. It is situated about 115 kms. South West distance from Bhabanipatna the district head quater, and about 6 kms. South West from Mohulpatna Panchayat Head Quarter. In the East is the Indrabati river and in south-west is Podapader village. The area where the village is situated is locally called as ***Dolra***. The area is srrounded with hill and forest. Its altitude is 2050 ft. sea level. The village is situated in a hilly area. Except, R. I (Revenue Officer) no government officers come to this village. Because, to reach in this village, one have to walk 2 kms. from Mohlpatna.

## Village History

This village is one of the oldest villages of this district. Before 8 decades there were total 8 families staying in this vilage. People of this village says that Seven goddesses locally called as Satabhuni were staying in a hill area, which is situated about half kms. distance from this village. The village gets its name from the youngest among them called Tikili. The villagers recall the oppressive British rule when they were forced to work without pay. At there were few people and much forests, they could survive on wild fruits.

## Demography

There are total 56 families are staying in this village. Out of which, 42 belongs to Schedule Tribe, 11 belongs to Schedule Cast and rest 3 families belongs to Other Backward Class. Its total population is 238, out of which 167 and belongs to ST, 60 belong to SC and rest 11

belongs to other back ward class. There are total 103 male and 135 females are staying in this village.

### Land

The village area is 942.20 acres of land. The soil is mostly lands are sandy and unfertile. 55.10 acres. are *dongoro* or hilly land. In this land they cultivated twice every 5 years. 127.37 acres of land are only covered with stones and is unsuitable for agriculture. 8.35 acres of land are used as graveyards, road and temples. Total culticable land is 15.22, and 7.21 acres of land is only used for agricultural purposes.

In 1985, 20 IAY houses were allotted to the villagers by the BDO Mr. Rajendra Mohan Mohanty. This encouraged several more families to come to settle in Tikilipadar, however no further such programmes have been taken up. One well and one tube well provide the water for the village. A pond for other purposes than domestic use is in a defunct and unused state. A government grain gola constructed by the ITDA contains three qtls of ragi. The BPL coverage is complete, and 4 people also get Old Age Pension.

### Facilities provided by Governments:

| Sl No | Name of Facilities | Year | Sources |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pond | 1994 | Block |
| 2 | Open well | 1994 | Block |
| 3 | Road repairing | 1997,2000 | Block |
| 4 | Village road | 1994 | Panchayat |

**Village KANARPAS**
**Panchayat : Yubarajpur**
**Block Thuamulrampur**
**District Kalahandi**

### Location

Kanarpas village comes under Yubarajpur gram Panchayat of Th. Rampur block of Kalahandi district. It is situated about 105 kms south west distance from Bhabanipatna the district head quarter, about 33 kms from block head quarter Th. rampur, amd about 6 kms south west from yubrajpur, the Panchayat had quarter. In the east Jayapatna., in

south and west Nabarangpur, and in North it is surrounded with Rayagada block.

## Village History

Kanarpas was a hamlet of Yubarajpur Panchayat. However, disease, and a hostile topography making communication difficult drove them to seek another place, and they settled in Kanarpas. Kanarpas gets its name as it is located in the corner of a forest. Kana meaning corner.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Village** | **AYODA KARANSAHI** |
| **G.p.** | **S.Koradasingha** |
| **Block** | **Rayagada** |
| **District :** | **Gajapati** |

## Location of the village

It is surrounded by hills and forests, with the District head quarters of Parlakhemundi 30kms away, and the Block headquarter 15kms and 3kms from the Panchayat headquarters. It has an altitude of 3000 feet.

## History of the village

Karansahi was oppressed Neelamani Patnaik, who was a stooge of the colonial powers. His exploitative and despotic ways of misappropriating their agricultural and forest produce, with the help of British soldiers were hated by the local tribal communities. They decided they could not tolerate him anymore, when he forced them to clean out his dirty drain, and carry away the filth.

They decided to break free of him, and chose another man, who was more benign, and gave them due recognition. Ayada, was a small hamlet, about two kilometers from Karansahi. Their existence was made miserable because of thieves and wild animals. They eventually decided to shift close to Karansahi, and the village became Ayadakaransahi.

## Demography

It is a completely tribal village of 48 households with a population of 194. Out of its total population 93(48%) are males and 101 (52 %) are

females. The maximum population is belongs to 14+-age group and least is 0-3 ages group.

## Socio-economic profile

There are 48 sabara families in the village. These sabara people are divided in to many sub groups like Kargi Badabhuyan, Dhangada bhuyan, Sabara and Sanabhuyan according to their work and responsibilities. A Sabar samaj helps to keep the traditions and cultural practices of the community alive.

The land holding in the village is very low, and people depend on wage employment, and migration for subsistence. People from this village have migrated to places as far away as Goa, Mumbai, and Tamilnadu. Needless to mention, these migrations have inevitably lead to extreme forms of exploitation with false promises luring the innocent youth away. Contractors promise high wages and lure the tribal people only to trap them on the worksite through non-payment. People who have worked for six months and more

Apart from wage labour and agriculture, the village community also supplements their income through minor forest produce, and livestock. Mahua, tamarind, salap, date palm juices from the forests are bartered with local traders needless to mention at quite unfair rates for their daily needs.

According to the table, out of 194 populations 77(40 %) are educated. Out of educated 49 (64%) are male and 28 (36%) are female. Again out of total educated 15 (19%) are literate and only one male and one female have passed matriculation.

## Health care facilities

Malaria, diarrhea, TB and skin diseases are common for the village. The nearest health care institutions are present in Narayanpur, which is 8 Kms from the village. They prefer private clinic than the PHC due to better service. The second preference is Rayagada, which is 30 Kms from this village. The ANM is quiet irregular. So people have to depend in traditional health care providers.

### Natural Resources

Landholding in the village is low. People thus cultivate upland slopes with no titledeeds. Horticultural crops are also grown on the uplands, supplementing the income from agriculture.

### Forest

A large forest adjacent to the village is a source for the different livelihood needs of the village including timber, firewood, fodder, and fruit and tubers. In addition the MFP from the forest helps enhance earnings.

### Water

There are 15 sources of water in the village. Out of 12 streams 6 are perennial. They are Baisuke, Riding, Trijole, Alatur, Gondojolo and Kansakuda. People use stream water for bathing and irrigation. Two wells are used for drinking purpose. The water of only pond is also used for bathing.

### Facilities provided by Governments

| Sl. No. | Name of Facilities | Year | Sources | Present condition |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Primary school | 1970 | Govt. | Good |
| 2 | Anganwadi Center | 1995 | Govt. | Not functioning properly |
| 3 | Electricity | 1999 | OSEB | Good |
| 4 | Well (2 nos) | 1972 | Block | Dry in Summer |
| 5 | Pond | 1982 | Block | Dry in Summer |
| 6 | Road (Village to Narayanpur) | 1986 | Panchayat | Not good |
| 7 | Check dam | 1975, 2000 | DRDA | Dry in summer |

### Beneficiaries of Government Programmes

| Sl. No. | Name of Programmes | No. of Beneficiaries |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | BPL | 41 |
| 2 | Antyodaya | 04 |
| 3 | IAY | 11 |
| 4 | Roofing Houses | 03 |
| 5 | OAP | 01 |

## Non-Governmental Programmes

AWARE and PREM are two voluntary organizations working in the village. AWARE has provided agricultural and animal husbandry loans, and taken up land development activity. PREM Plan has distributed baby food, mosquito coils and lanterns and conducted AIDs and malaria awareness programmes.

**Village : TILLI**
**G.p. : Lailai**
**Block : Rayagada**
**District : Gajapati**

## Location

Tilli is one of the hill villages of Lailai Panchayat of Rayagada block. It is surrounded by hills and forest. It is situated in southern west part of Gajapati district, 49 kms distance from Paralakhemundi at an altitude of 3000 feet above mean sea level.

## History of the village

Tilli was a small village of just 12 families before independence, paying considerable revenues through a non-tribal mediator. Subsequently, the village grew in size, with immigration of other tribal families, indicating that the village has a fertile, and conducive conditions.

## Demography

There are 98 tribal families in the village. Out of total population 427, there are 195 (46%) are male and 232 (54%) are female. The following table shows the age wise classification of population for 0-3, 3-6, 6-14 and above 14 are 45(10.5%), 54(12.6%), 76(17.8%) and 252(59.0%) respectively.

## Socio-economic profile

Wage employment and agriculture are the major livelihood supports for the people. People go to Rayagada, Narayanpur, Jirango for work at rates as low as Rs 20 to 30 per day. About 13 persons have migrated to Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Kamay in Arunachal Pradesh. There are 3-bonded labours in the village. They work in neighboring village. Forest produce also supplements their income including sale of firewood in Narayanpur, Rayagada and Contraband at Rs 25 to 30 per bundle.

Livestock is also a major source of income in case of need. Among the major livestock the numbers of goat, Oxen, cow, pig and calf are 110, 8,16,12,11 and 14 respectively.

Out of 427 populations 68(16 %) are educated. Out of educated 47 (69%) are male and 21 (31%) are female. Again out of total educated 46 (68%) are literate. No one has passed 7th in the village.

### Health facilities

There is no health care facility for the village. The ANM comes to the village once in a month. Due to non-availability of communication facilities the doctors never visit the village. The nearest PHC is at Rayagada, the Block Head Quarter. There is no sub center in the Panchayat.

### Forest

The village is surrounded by forest. So many forest products like broom; cashew, mango, date palm, salap power, tamarind and mahua etc are available. It provides food security and income to them.

### Water

There are 11 sources of water around the village. Among them 8 streams, two dug wells and one tube well. The ever-flowing streams are Andry Nalo, Boga bondha Nalo, Pitango Nalo and Bangobandho Nalo. Tubewell water is used for drinking. The rest sources are used for bathing and irrigation purposes.

### Facilities provided by Governments

| Sl. No. | Name of Facilities | Year | Sources | Present condition |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Primary school | 1992 | Block | Damaged |
| 2 | Open well | 1998 | Block | Dry |
| 3 | Tube well | 2000 | ITDA | Good |
| 4 | Road (Tilli to Jamtarang) | 1995 | Panchayat | Not good |

According to most reports of the people, government programmes have not helped to improve the condition of the people in the village.

## Beneficiaries of Government Programmes

| Sl. No. | Name of Programmes | No of Beneficiaries |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | BPL | 53 |
| 2 | Physical disability | 02 |
| 3 | IAY | 09 |
| 4 | Roofing Houses | 05 |
| 5 | OAP | 09 |
| 6 | APL | 07 |

## Non-Governmental Programmes

Society for the welfare of weaker sections has been working in the village for the last two years. It has provided goat loans, and taken land development activity.

**Village RANGINIGUDA**
**G.p. Somanathpur**
**Block Kudumulugumma**
**District : Malkangiri**

## Location of the village

Ranginiguda was previously under Somanathpur Gram Panchayat. It is about 7 kms away from Block Head Quarter. There are no communication facilities to this village, so one has to walk for 3 kms for the nearest bus stop.

## History of the village

Ranginiguda is a breakaway village from Ambiliguda in Panghati area. Unable to withstand the oppression of the headman 12 Kondh families broke away and settled in Dudumaguda, a neighbouring village. This time they were affected by floods caused by the construction of Balimela. They mirgrated for the second time, and settled in Ranginiguda, a place with dense forests and also abundance of bamboo. The community soon learned to supplement their income by weaving bamboo baskets.

## Demography

There are 39 families in the village. The total population is 157. Out of 157 populations, 140(89%) are ST and 17(11%) are OBC.

The proportion of male and female in case of ST is same. But the proportion of female is more in case of OBC.

Out of 39 families, 7 (18.0%) are rich, 8(20.5%) are medium, 10(25.6%) are poor and 14(35.9%) are very poor. The riches have more than 4 acres land each. As a better quality of land the production is sufficient for whole year. They have more livestock and hire labour in their fields. The medium families have 2 to 3 acres of land each. They have no problems of food for 8 to 10 months. They engage in agriculture as well as rearing of cattle and goat. The poor families have an average of 1 acre of land. It provides food for 2 to 3 months. So they depend on wage labour and basket making. The very poor families are landless. They totally depend on wage employment, collection of forest produces and bamboo work. They have a few domestic animals.

## Education

Only 3 males are literate due to non-availability of school in the village. Now an NGO called MODE has opened an innovative school for the last two years. There are 35 students in two classes. It is working in the morning and evening.

## Health facilities

There are no health facilities in the village. The nearest primary health center is 3 kms away from the village. Due to financial problems and lack of awareness for health and hygiene they depend on magico religious health healers. Consecutive illness leads them to live a miserable life.

## Natural Resources

### Land

Only seven households have more than 3 acres of land and the rest are landless. Most of the land are Bhatta and bila land. A few have kitchen garden and dongar land. So they cultivate ragi, paddy, maize, Niger and pulses in the non-irrigated land. They cultivate it in their traditional method.

### Water

There are three tube wells found in the village. Out of which only two are functioning. So people depend on a near by stream for drinking and bathing. The valley bottom lands are used for cultivation of paddy.

## Governmental/Non-governmental Programmes

The government has installed two tube wells and three wells in the village. Apart from this 16 families have got BPL card, 7 Old Age pensions, 2 Indira Awas Yojana and 2 Matrumangal Yojana.

An innovative school has been opened by the MODE organization. 35 children are studying in the school. Again two self Help Groups have been formed by MODE.

### Beneficiaries of Government Programmes

| Sl. No. | Name of Programmes | No. of Beneficiaries |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | BPL | 16 |
| 2 | Antyodaya | 2 |
| 3 | OAP | 2 |
| 4 | IAY | 10 |

**Village : METAGUDA**
**G.P. : Badapadar**
**Block : Kudumulugumma**
**District : Malkangiri**

## Location of the village

The village Metaguda comes under Badapadar Panchayat of Kudumulugumma Block in Malkangiri district. It is an isolated village in hill tracts. It is situated 70 kms away from Block Head Quarter.

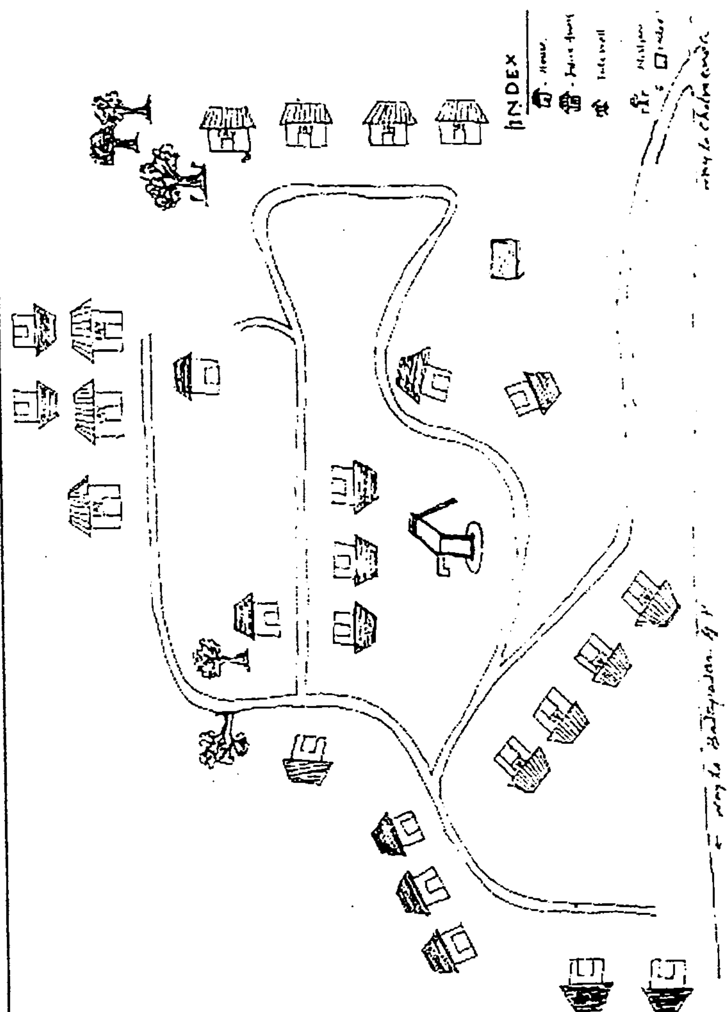
## History of the village

About a century ago, the ancestors of Metaguda village were settled near of Panasghati. The Headman of the village tortured them. As a result of conflict, dacoits and theft, they suffered a lot. So 10 families left the settlement and started a new settlement as Metaguda. Then a few other families followed them. That settlement was called as Metaguda means combination of bushes and stone.

## Demography

Metaguda is an exclusive by tribal village of 24 families. Its population is 107. Out of which 51(48%) are males and 56(52%) are females.

# SOCIAL MAP: METAGUDA



Again 33(305) are below at the age of 6 years and 59(55%) are above at the age of 14 years.

## Education

There are no education facilities in the village. The nearest primary school is in Panashghati that is 3 kms from Metaguda. There id not a single school going children due to no proper communication facilities. Except 3 literate males all villagers are illiterate.

## Health

The ANM center/PHC is situated about 4 kms away from the village. Owing to financial problems and distance of the hospital the villagers are deprived of getting any health care facilities from the government. The ANM and ICDS worker do not come to the village. The ICDS center is 2 kms away from the village. The children are also deprived of getting food aid. Again people have lack of knowledge about the health and hygiene. So they suffer from malaria, fever, skin diseases etc. then they depend of local traditional health healers.

## Socio-economic profile

## Natural resource management

### Land

Out of 24 households 5 of them have 1-3 acres of land and the rest have few acres of land. These lands are mainly found at the riverside. However poor irrigation facilities allows for only single cropping. The irrigation facilities are also less. So people grow ragi, paddy, maize, kosala and Niger. The method of cultivation is rudimentary.

### Water

There is one tube well found in Metaguda village. It is used for drinking purpose. For daily requirement they depend on stream water as well as dug well. There is one river and two nalas around the village. They use the river for bathing and drinking for domestic animals.

## Government and Non-government facilities

Only a few Governmental programmes have been implemented. Among them the village road in 1996 and and tube well and one dug well in 2000 are major.

**Beneficiaries of Government Programmes**

| Sl. No. | Name of Programmes | No. of Beneficiaries |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | BPL | 16 |
| 2 | Antyodaya | 2 |
| 3 | OAP | 2 |
| 4 | IAY | 10 |

No of families for the beneficiaries of BPL, Antyodaya, OAP and IAY are 16, 2, 2 and 10 respectively.

The MODE Organisation has established a Grain bank. No other activities has been done any Organisation.

**Village : PUSHGHATI**
**G.P. : Godibali**
**Block : Kashipur**
**District : Rayagada**

## Location of the village

Pushghati is situated about 5 kms from Panchayat Head Quarter and 42 kms from district Head Quarter. It surrounded by dongars and forest.

## History of the village

Pushghati was a dense forest, 45 years back, when the residents first settled there. The Mandibisi King found the settlement and forced them to give revenue in terms of their crops, gold, and even utensils. They were also used as forced labour.

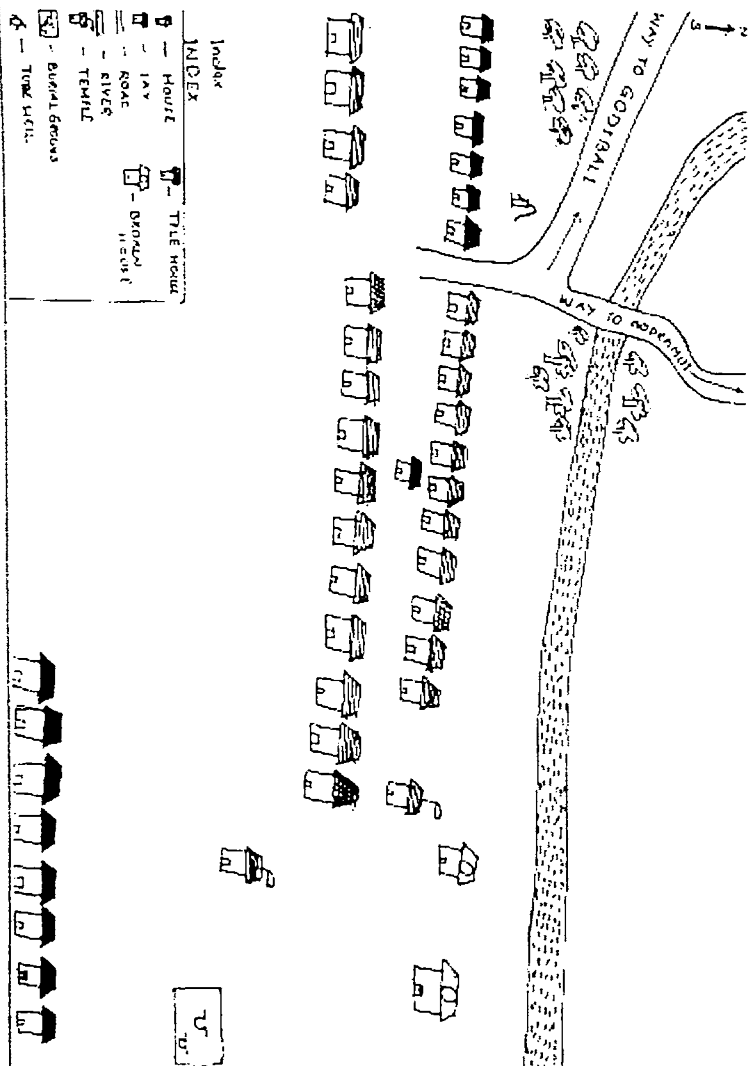
## Demography

Pushghati is an exclusive tribal village of 26 families. The total population is 117. Out of total population 61(52%) are males and 56(48%) are females. Again out of total population 30(25.6%) are below 6 years of age, 27(23.1%) are between the age group of 6 to 14 years of age. But there are no females in the age group of less than 3 years and no males in the age group of 3 to 6 years.

## Socio-economic profile

On the basis of land, income, food and livestock, families are divided in to 3 categories i.e. better off, medium and poor. Out of 26 families

# SOCIAL MAP OF PUSHGHATI






Source: Author, Digitized by PPRACHIN, SOA

3(11.5%) are better off, 19(73.1%) are medium and 4 (15.4%) are poor. The better off families have more land and big family size. They are capable of using fertilizers and pesticides to get better yield. So they have no shortage of food for the whole year.

## Education

There is no government school in the village. So Agragamee has opened a night school. Now 30 boys and 16 girls are studying in the school. Now 3 students are reading in Majhiguda Ashram School.

Out of 117 populations, 47(40.2%) are educated. Among them31 (66%) are males and 16(34%) are females. Out of 47 educated, 22(46.8%) are literate, 15(31.9%) are in 0-3 classes and 9(19.1%) are in 4-5 classes. No one in the village has passes matriculation.

## Health facilities

There are no health facilities in the village. The two nearest Health centers are Mandibisi and Sikarpai that are 10 kms and 12 kms away from the village respectively. The ANM visits once in two or three months. Two women of this village have got Rs 500 each in Matrumangal scheme.

## Natural resources management

### Land

There is not sufficient land for agricultural purpose. Out of total land 93.79 acres are Bhatta land, 294.68 acres are dongar land, 7.57 acres are back yard and 394 acres are wasteland. They grow various crops like ragi, paddy, maize, Niger, pulses etc for consumption.

### Forest

The village has been surrounded by forest. So many forest products like broom; cashew, mango, tamarind and mahua etc are available. It provides food security and income to them. They sell these items in Sikarpai and other local market.

### Water

There is a river flowing near the village. It is used for bathing, drinking of animals and domestic purpose. There are two nala around the village. These are also used for animals. The only tube well is used for drinking and cooking.

### Governmental work

| Sl.No | Programme | Year | Agency | Condition |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Drain | 1998 | Panchayat | Good |
| 2 | Tube well | 1992 | PWD | Running |

There is no major works have been done in the village. A drain work had provided employment for only 35 days. The other work, tube well is in a running condition.

### Beneficiaries of Government Programmes:

| Sl. No. | Name of Programmes | No. of Beneficiaries |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | BPL | 10 |
| 2 | Antyodaya | 02 |
| 3 | OAP | 01 |
| 4 | IAY | 02 |

The beneficiaries for the BPL, Antyodaya, OAP and IAY are 10, 2,1 and 2 respectively.

### Non-governmental work

Agragamee, a voluntary organization formed Grain Bank in the village in 1995. It provides food security to the people. Now there are 17 bags of Ragi and Kosala. Apart from this it has opened a night school in 1998.

**Village KUKUDAGAD**
**G.p. Manusgaon**
**Block : Kashipur**
**District : Rayagada**

## Location of the village

Kukudagad village comes under Manusgaon Gram Panchayat of Kashipur Block of Rayagada District. It is about 4 kms from Panchayat Head Quarter, 25 kms from the Block Head Quarter and 95 kms from district Head Quarter. It is situated between two hills.

## History of the village

Before independence 15 families were living in the village. The village was ruled by a king. It was surrounded by forests. Once the king was visited the village occasionally. After facing many problems, he ordered the people to construct a road at free of cost. Then people constructed a road. The king beat the lazy people. Then a few outside families came to reside in the village. The leader of the village gave permission to live with them. After independence, the Government's rule was implemented. From that time, the name Kukudagad has been known.

## Demography

There are 71 families in the village. Out of 71 families 53(74.6%) are Scheduled Tribe and 18(25.4%) are Scheduled Caste. The proportion of males and females are same. ST populations are 213(73%) and SC populations are 80(27%). The percentage of females (53.5%) is more than the males in case of ST. But it is contradictory in case for the SC.

## Socio-economic profile

There are 71 families in the village. On the basis of land, income, food etc these families are divided in to 4 categories i.e. better off, Medium, poor and very poor. 5(7.0%) families are Better off.

All families depend of forest collection according to their need, leisure and manpower. The poor families depend more then the upper categories. They collect hill brooms, masani bark, firewood, tamarind etc. they use these items for self consumption as well as for selling.

## Education

98 persons are educated in the village that is 33.4 percent of the total population. Out of 213 ST populations 42(19.7%) are educated. But in

case of SC it is 56(70%). So education is far better in case of SC than ST. But education for male is 95 percent for ST and 75 percent for SC. Again percentage of literacy is more then 50 percent. There is a primary school in the village and now its strength is 50.

### Health facilities

The ICDS worker and ANM visit the village in every month. The ANM check the health of women and children, distribute medicines. So people depend more on her because the ANM canter is situated in Singar Kharak that is 3 kms form Kukudagad.

### Water

There are two perennial rivers flowing by. Again two nala are flowing near the village. They use river water for bathing, irrigation and for anilmals. They use drinking water from the tube wells.

### Governmental programmes

| Sl.No. | Name of the Programme | Which year | Sources | Present condition |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tube well | 1998 | Government | Good |
| 2 | Tube well | 1999 | Government | Good |
| 3 | Road work | 1999 | Panchayat | Good |
| 4 | Road work | 2001 | Panchayat | Good |
| 5 | Well | 1998 | Panchayat | Damaged |
| 6 | Well | 1980 | Panchayat | Good |
| 7 | Pond | 1997 | IFAD | Damaged |
| 8 | Pond | 1998 | IFAD | Damaged |
| 9 | Bridge | 2001 | Panchayat | Good |

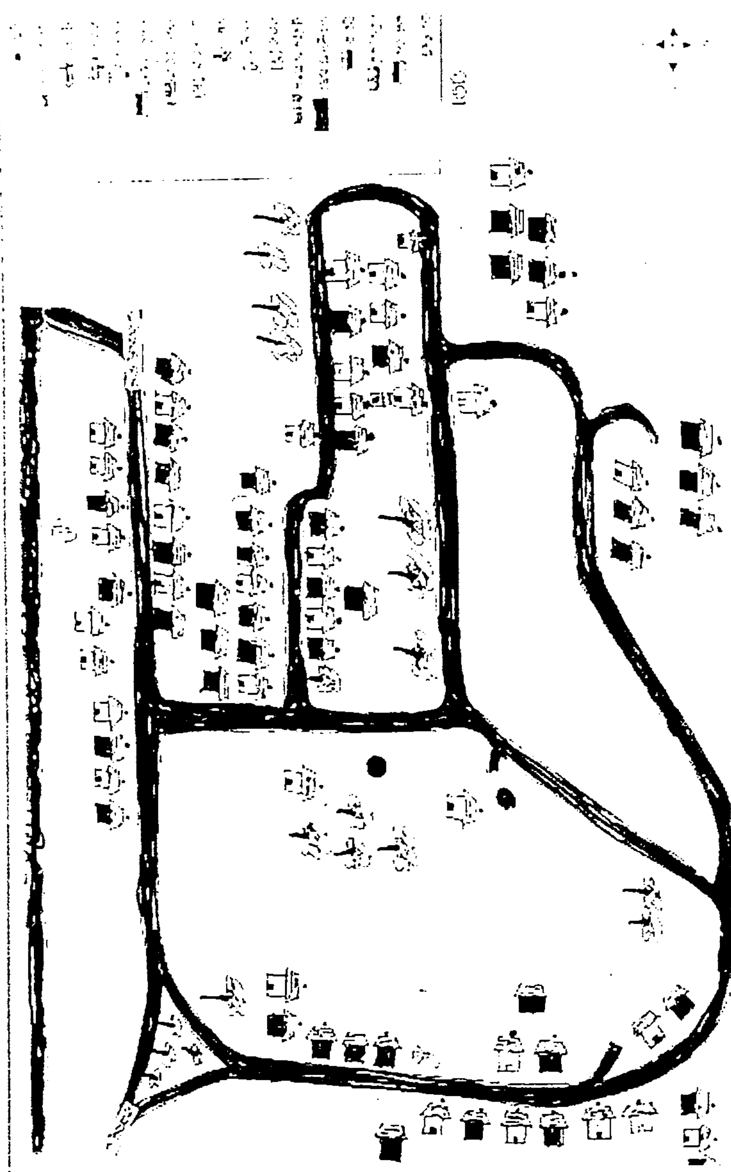
## Governmental Beneficiaries

| Sl. No. | Name of Programmes | No. of Beneficiaries |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | BPL | 16 |
| 2 | OAP | 02 |

## Non-Governmental Programme

Agragamee, a voluntary organization has formed a 'Grain Bank' with the help of UNICEF in 1994. It provides food security to the people in case of need. Now the stock is 26 bags of ragi and Kosala.

## SOCIAL MAP: KUKUDAGADA
## BLOCK: KASHIPUR





*Source: Author, Digitized by PPRACHIN, SOA*

# 6. STARVATION DEATHS IN KASHIPUR: 20 YEARS HISTORY

In my 20 years of experience in the tribal villages, I have seen that untimely deaths occur between the months of June and September. Government as well as Non-governmental sources have also provided evidence to this fact. Not, just in Kashipur, but in the whole of undivided Koraput, such deaths are not an uncommon occurrence, specially in the more inaccessible villages. In the 60s and 70s, severe droughts in Kalahandi were highlighted by different newspapers with graphic skeletal picture. These pictures are on exhibit in the Gopabandhu Bhavan. A perusal of the District Gazetteers for Kalahandi and Koraput also reveals the misery and deaths faced by tribal populations during these months.

The. last weak of June, 1980 is still fresh in my mind. I had just come from Tilonia in Rajasthan to survey the conditions of tribal communities in South and West Orissa. It was not just books like Gopinath Mahanty's Paraja and Amrutara Santaana that attracted me to these regions. I had visited these regions during 1977-78, when I was part of the OXFAM West Orissa Programme. At that time I had seen the tribal communities, including, Bhunjia, binjhal, Gond, Kondh, Sabar, in close proximity, and tried to understand their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. I had sought to discover Sukru Jahni of Gopinath Mahanti's Paraja in these villages. Over a period of time, I became more and more determined to take up social work and research in these backward districts. In 1980, when I reached Kashipur, I realised how the spider's web of the Sahukar had trapped the tribal people in exploitation and repression.

1980

The months of June and July in Kashipur are exceptionally wretched. There is no road connecting 12 out of 17 Pacnahayats. I was moving from village to village for a survey. A foul odour hit me the moment I entered any village. Mango stones were stocked inside and outside every tribal household. A horde of flies hovered over these, and the smell of rot was coming from them. Shocked, I asked them why they collected mango seeds like this. It was deeply upsetting when they replied that they had collected these kernels to eat. Not understanding, I insisted on knowing how they could consume anything so bitter. They explained to me with great patience why and how they consumed these obnoxious stuff. Like a fool I wanted to know why they did not get anything else to eat during the monsoon months, and what was it they cultivated. They said that the 'Sahukar' has taken their land. During the monsoon, they were forced to borrow from the Sahukar. The repayment of the loan finished their harvest of crops, and they had nothing left. I had read about the Sahukar, in Gopinath Mahanty's novel. But, I learnt much more about his evil ways from the tribals. The overarching influence of the Sahukar, and his cold-blooded nature were a revelation to me. Mango kernels were the gift of the Sahukar I realised, the only thing they left for the tribals, when they were finished with their loans and interests. No tribals have ever told me that they like mango kernels. It is only because of food scarcity that they are forced to eat mango kernels. The picture and the words of the tribal people in the villages, I still remember as if it was just yesterday.

Of the fifty years of independence I have been a witness to 20 years of tribal independence. It is a history of exploitation and oppression, and history of loot of the tribal people by the 'Sahukars' and the middlemen. The 'Sahukar' explains that without him the tribal people cannot survive. In every Panchayat, there are atleast one or two 'Sahukars'. In Kashipur, Tikiri, Gorakhpur, and Maikanch, these people are more powerful than the ones in the more interior Panchayats. Over and above all of them are the business men from Raipur, and Vishakapatnam. They do not belong to any single caste, they maybe Brahmins, Shundies, Marwadies or Kumuties. Place like Kashipur are under their thumb, and they have selected villages, which are their special fiefdom. How integrally linked

are tribals and the Sahukar is indicated by the fact that if there is no 'Sahukar in any village, then, the tribal community makes it a point to appoint one amongst themselves, who is more aggressive than the Sahukar. The primary objective of this is to ensure their food grain in the rainy season, no matter that they are pushed into usury by this.

The hue and cry over the starvation deaths in Kashipur is primarily because of the unchecked exploitation by these people, the 'Sahukars'. The reason why the majority of the government programmes fail, and the reason why even the persistent efforts of a voluntary organisation like Agragamee do not bear fruit, is the 'Sahukar'. All this despite the fact that the tribals of Kashipur are no longer the silent, and submissive community of the past, despite the fact that they have now learned to speak out their grievances, and even warn the errant 'Sahukar' to mend his ways. The 'Sahukar' in Kashipur is also petty politician, contractor, landlord and contractor rolled into one. He is the shrewdest and most cunning person around. He makes out as if he is born to serve the tribal people, and is now emerging as their saviour.

**1983**

The same village, Bilamal, where in 2001, people had died, and politicians, media, and government personnel rushed to express their sympathies, had been affected by an epidemic in 1983. 13 people from two families succumbed. As I knew the District Collector, he sent me with the BDO and the tahsildar tofind out the cause of death, and the situation there. Subsequently, he himself visited the village. As Koraput was the district headquarters then, the communication to Kashipur was very difficult. Even the media found it difficult to reach, and did not make particular effort. The politicians and the officers were casual about the whole incident. It was only because of the conern of a sympathetic and concerned District Collector that the health department functionaries even made a visit to the village. Because the District Collector insisted, inquiries were conducted. Several health experts from Cuttack and Berhampur medical colleges made their visits to the village, and reported that the cause of death is not starvation, but the mango kernels and other poisonous and toxic foods that the people consumed. Even during the inquiry, nobody admitted their mistakes,

nor was anything pinned down to any fault pinned down on any person. It was never clear weather the death was due to lack of food, or due to polluted water or poisonous food. The only fact that was established was that people had died! The role of the 'Sahukar' in the people's impoverishment was also never established. However, when the relief supplies started, the Sahukars stepped in to grab the major benefits of even these emergency supplies. Today also the situation continues. An old man from Bilamal lost three sons, three daughters in law, and two grand children. He told me that they had just returned from the fields, and they died. There was a panic in the village that some evil spirit was holding them in their clutches. They were not ready to accept the treatment of the doctors. It took a long time for us to explain and persuade them to accept the medical relief.

**1984**

There is violent attack on Agragamee and• Agragamee workers. I am also attacked, with an intent to kill;

**1985**

The sub-divisional officer, Gunupur was a young IAS officer. He informed the District Collector, and the Government about the starvation deaths. At that time, the government was trying hard to prove that these were not starvation deaths. Even as it was found that what the SDO said was true, the Chief Minister wanted to take action against him and suspend him. However, the young officer survived because of his good luck.

**1987**

There was once again much outcry about the starvation deaths in Kashipur. In August and September that year, more than 200 tribal and harijan people died in Kashipur under unnatural circumstances. These deaths were also confined to just some families. Most of them had suffered diahorrea and vomiting before they died. The major reason was lack of food, which lead them to eat poisonous substances. All this caused much argument and discussions. At that time, the Chief Minister, Janaki Ballabh Patnaik, and Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi came to

Kashipur. The Prime Minister wanted to know the real cause of these deaths from a representative of a voluntary organisation like me. However, making the excuses of security reasons, the administration did not allow the meeting. However, as luck would have it, subsequently, within a month's time, I had the opportunity of meeting the Prime Minister and his advisors, and realising the real cause of the starvation deaths in Kashipur, they held the Chief Minister, and the government of Orissa responsible for the deaths. At that time, the 'Sahukars' determined the government in power. There was much discussion why the central relief and aid was not reaching the villages. There was also a discussion on the alternatives at different levels. The reports of starvation and sale of children in Kalahandi underlined the gravity of the situation in Kashipur.

There is an effort from the side of the administration to arrest me, to prevent me from meeting the Prime Minister on his visit to Kashipur.

**1988**

The Orissa Tribal Development Project begins in Kashipur with a loan from the The Infternational Fund for Agricultural Development ((IFAD) as a result of the efforts of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The major object of the project was to fight against hunger, as also to help people become self-reliant, and decide the course of their own development. Agragamee was give the responsibility of empowerment and capacity building of the tribal community, and increase community participation in the whole programme. The project began with a budget of Rs.32crores. Agragamee took its responsibility seriously, and began awareness generation, supporting people's efforts for ensuring accountability, as also helping village committees to take up the development work for their village. The efforts affected the interests of the Sahukar, contractors, and the Government officials. So much so that even the MLAs and MPs were unable to get their percentages. The sahukars, politicians, and the government officials came together and plotted to get Agtagamee out of the IFAD project. The MLA of Lakhimpur Constituency, raised false questions against me and Agragamee. There was storm in the Orissa Assembly, and the 'House Committee' for Tribal and Harijan Welfare took up an inquiry into my conduct, and

the working of Agragamee. The Inquiry lasted the best part of two years, but, they could not find anything wrong. Interestingly, the village of Panasaguda which was affected by starvation deaths in 2001, had been instigated by the Sahukar groups in 1988 to provide false evidence against Agragamee and me. The kind of political and administrative support required for empowering people was sorely lacking under the IFAD project. Thus in 1994, Agragamee was forced to withdraw from the IFAD Project. This was the opportunity that Sahukars were waiting for. An era of loot in broad daylight. (Lootathraj). The Sahukar, Contractor, local politicians, Amlamane, joined hands and misappropriated (graas) all the funds under the project. Rumours were rife that the District Collector burnt mid-night oil to misappropriate funds. It was also believed that the particular DC had been picked up for just such a purpose by the local MLAs and Ministers. The evaluation report of the IFAD Project, by the organisation itself states that the project failed in achieving its basic objectives because the local voluntary organisation withdrew from the project.

**1991**

There was starvation in Daldala village in Dasmantpur Block, Koraput district. At that time too there was a rush of officers, politicians, newspersons to the village. The District Administration was harassed and helpless. Atista. There was much discussion on how there could be an end to starvation deaths. It was imperative to take up foolproof development programmes in the villages which were being affected bt starvation deaths, in which voluntary organisations can be involved. No voluntary organisation was willing to work in the backward and underdeveloped regions like Kashipur and Dasmantpur. But, Agragamee stepped forward to confront the situation.

**1992**

There is a starred question in the Orissa Assembly, attacking Agragamee and Agragamee workers. The Harijan and Tribal Welfare House Committee take up an inquiry that goes on for two years.

**1997**

Agragamee's field offices are attacked by the Sahukar, and mercenaries hired by the Mining Companies;

**1998**

7 workers of Agragamee are arrested, and Orissa Government issues a ban order against Agragamee, prohibiting all government offices from supporting Agragamee. It also tries to stop central government supports;

**1999**

Paikkhupakahl was the last village in Kashipur. The Utkal Alumina vehicle used to go there regulalrly (anavarat). It was on the way to Baphlimali plateau, which was the cache of bauxite being eyed by the UAIL (Utkal Alumina International Limited) and against the mining of which there was a powerful movement in Kashipur. The UAIL had adopted and established rapport in this village, and was propagating that it had taken up much development works here. 9 people died from eating poisonous substances due to food shortage in this village. But, the local administration, media, as well as the politicians covered up UAIL's presence in the village. The Sahukars ofcourse benefited hugely for keeping quiet about the UAIL's role. The company took media persons specially to showcase that they had done much for the development of the village, and that voluntary organisations like Agragamee were the ones responsible for such a condition.

A project for tribal development of Rs. 2 crores with support from UNDP is returned because of Government of Orissa's refusal;

**2000**

Planning Commission sanctions 7lakhs for a study of the KBK districts, however due to the efforts of the Minister for Planning, and several other high level officers, the project is returned. The end of the year saw the police firing, and mindless killing of three tribal people. Following

this there is an attack on the Agragamee campus, and efforts to arrest the Director in connection with the firing!

**2001**

The reported starvation deaths in Kashipur, which have created a storm in the public mind has been a source of much concern and anxiety for us. The mining companies have been making persistent attempts to enter into the region, and counter the effects of the firing in Maikanch. They have tried in various ways to make Agragamee responsible for everything. Even those who cannot stay for even a day in a tribal village provide eloquent descriptions of the situation there. What Agragamee can do and has done, and what it will not do is known today to everyone. We have persistently worked in the most difficult circumstances (nirbachhinna), even at the time of maximum conflict and tension, we have not admitted defeat. Despite the best efforts of the government, the sahukarsand the political parties, Agragamee still continues its work. The time has come to tell the people of Orissa the kind of attacks we have suffered.

There is increased attempt to undo the constructive development works taken up by Agragamee. Sahukars make a renewed effort to make sure the grain bank institution collapses.

It needs to be pondered what would have been the tribal situation if these persistent attacks on Agragamee had not taken place. I daresay that the constructive and positive efforts of Agragamee would have borne fruit and much visible improvement would have resulted in this backward and underdeveloped Block of Kashipur. One also needs to analyse whether the people's movement in Kashipur would have strengthened the process of development or hampered it. Social development and political literacy, the two pillars of Agragamee's interventions could perhaps have helped a new society to emerge, and perhaps the tribals would have realised their basic human rights beginning with the right to life. Surely a day will come when the tribals of Kashipur will rise to fight for their right to life, and will then acknowledge the efforts and contributions of Agragamee.

Agragamee firmly believes that only a combined effort of all will help the tribal people of Kashipur overcome oppression and poverty. Neither the Government nor the voluntary organisations can bring in any tangible and sustainable change alone. The condition ofd the tribals of Kashipur is the result of moneylender class.. to counter this, there is need for help and support from different quarters.

# 7. IN CONCLUSION

## Food Security In the Tribal Regions

## Problems & Prospects

Food security has become the new mantra of development planners. There are formulae and scheme and calculations, and all manner of proposals and ideas for food security. But in the tribal regions it is important to understand the real causes behind the food insecurity. Apart from the various factors of Government support, wages and unemployment, as also lack of education there is a need to look at the power play in the tribal regions. The tribal communities have been subjected to constant and persistent disempowerment over the last 100 years and more. This was initially because of state-centric policies which looked at most rural and tribal communities as recipients of charity and beneficence of the state. The euro-centric view that these are uncivilised 'savages', for whom the policy makers have to plan and take on the responsibility of development persisted well into the post-independence era. Thus, the top down community development approach was well-meaning and well intentioned, but there was little involvement of the community in this, and reports after reports indicated that this approach had only made the rich richer, and the poor poorer. Then, from the early eighties, the era of participatory development began. People like Robert Chambers added value by talking of putting the first last, etc., and then the language was soon appropriated by World Bank, who put people first into the reservoirs of large dams, and then with the help of Michael Cherneas wrote volumes on participatory drowning, only taking care to replace the word drowning

with 'development'. But, in India, there was an era of hope and sensitivity, with grassroots voluntary organisations representing in central government bodies like the CAPART, and the emphasis on Panchayats, culminating in the $73^{rd}$ amendment, and subsequently the Provision of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act) in 1996.

However, the PESA Act seems almost like the last gift of our democratic Government to its little people, who still remained last, despite the huge amounts of prose to the contrary, before it began a process of structural adjustments that in reality meant giving less and less to the poorer communities, till they were left with not even a place to stand on. The present report in reality show-cases the systematic and sustained denial of all benefits and rights to the poor by democratic governments. The poor do not get employment, they are denied BPL status, their child nutrition supplies are siphoned off, and they are even cheated of subsidies in bank loans, they are provided with just one teacher for five classes, who is too poorly motivated anyway to even make an effort to teach, their drinking water facilities are non-existent................ the list can just go on.

60 years after independence, planning, and administration in the tribal regions continue to be completely top down. Funds and allocations channelled for development are controlled by a bureaucratic structure that defeats almost all attempts of people to access information, decide development priorities, and take any steps, towards self-reliance. On the other hand, development administration in the tribal regions, and in most rural regions in fact creates and nurtures a class of pimps and touts, who are willing to go along with the BDOs, the JEs, and other various officers in their never ending quest for bribes. The visible misappropriation filters out more than 75% of development and welfare benefits from the poor in the villages and leaves them completely wretched and hopeless. We find in this study, that in almost every village taken up, people have made several appeals and demands to authorities to deliver, and bring to book errant contractors, and functionaries, but, people have received little positive response from the bureaucratic or administrative authorities for their appeals, and

have had to accept that corruption will be the norm as it receives the tacit support of the all powerful Sarkar. If one compares reports formulated by administration in the British times, and the attitudes of the officials during the present times, then, one finds several instances where the colonial officials have acted with much more sensitivity than those in the present times.

If we look at statistics, the poverty line percentages are said to have declined from 56.4% in 1973-74 to 37.18 in 1993-94 in rural areas, and from 49% to 32.4% in urban areas at 1973-74 prices. However, if we look more closely and try to figure out poverty line estimates as people unable to access enough food to even make up for the daily calorie needs (estimated at 2400 for rural populations, and at 2100 for urban populations), then we find the percentage of people unable to meet their minimum daily calorie requirements is actually 75% for rural areas, and 54% for urban areas. In Orissa, with stark contrasts of overflowing godowns and hunger and distress migrations hitting everyone, we find that we still have some of the worst human development indicators in terms of infant mortality and extent of malnourishment

This insensitivity extends to and in fact is enhanced when large dam or industrial projects are planned in the rural and tribal areas. The human status of the local communities seems to be quite forgotten, and they are seen as obstacles, and unwanted elements. The very process of replacing entire cultures and communities with monistic industries or hydro-power projects is a consolidation of the disempowerment of these communities that was initiated by the colonial powers to access the resource bases in the tribal and rural regions of the country. Being forced to give up their livelihoods, their survival resources, and relocate at the behest of an insensitive state that comes up with ill-formed colonies in semi-desert conditions as the rehabilitation option is the ultimate destruction of all sense of self and dignity. The alienation of the displaced communities is complete, as a high-handed state shuts out forested areas for the displaced, thereby not even making effort to undo its own wrong this, despite the fact that far greater sympathy and understanding

have been shown towards refugee communities from our neighbouring countries. Within the country, thus the state is able to create refugee communities of its own people without even the violence of a war!

Such attitudes have served to perpetuate and enhance poverty over the years, with the divide becoming obscenely apparent in places like Chandragiri in Gajapati District, where the Government has gone out of its way to settle Tibetan refugee colonies to make a political statement, while ignoring the plight of the local tribals. In the Dandakarnya regions, where huge tracts of forests were de-reserved for the sake of the Bengali refugees from Bangladesh, the growing differences between the local communities has been the cause of rising tensions in the region, with more than 8 women and men being killed in two incidents of police firing in Nabrangpur in 2001.

## Access & Control over Productive resources

A major change that is taking place in the rural areas is the increasing constraint on resources, and the alienation of local populations from their resource base, including land, forests, and water. In Orissa, the tribal communities by and large denied access to the productive low lands in the tribal regions, have been surviving on sloping uplands taking recourse to shifting cultivation. The state has not bothered to put into place a policy that would enable these tribal cultivators to have any security of cultivation, as there has been a rule preventing ownership over sloping land. The tribal communities thus have always been encroachers, unable to optimise on any investment, and always insecure of their access to these lands, as from time to time, Government programmes for plantations, and other programmes take over the slopes, without developing any viable alternatives for the tribal cultivators.

Special Acts meant for the tribal regions are either ignored, diluted, or circumvented in various ways. Thus, the clause preventing transfer of tribal land to non-tribal parties is almost completely overlooked, as land transfers continue to take place in the tribal regions in the interests of private corporations opening up the area for harmful, polluting

industries; land acquisition for public purposes is taken up to hand over tribal land to private parties, and the Panchayats Extension to the Tribal Areas Act, which sanctions complete control over land, water and forest resources to local communities in the fifth schedule areas has been diluted, and the power taken away from the Gram Panchayat to be handed over to the second and third tiers. Thus the tribal communities have a more and more constrained survival resource base.

In addition, the investment ratios for tribal land is also very low, in terms of subsidies, incentives, and even development schemes. Major portions of the watershed development programmes taken up by the Government benefit the people with ownership of land, and since tribal people have very little land, they get the least benefits. Thus growth in tribal production rates, income levels and quality of life is slow, almost nil, of not negative.

## Agricultural Labour

An important consideration when we talk of food security should necessarily be Agricultural labourers. This is one of the most vulnerable sections of the society, suffering from job insecurity, poverty, indebtedness, bondage, forced migration, rampant exploitation, malnourishment, illiteracy, denial of access to productive resources, as well as major government subsidies, discrimination, lack of social security and about the most feeble political voice. Surveys indicate that the dependence on agriculture has come down from 63.8% in 1993 to 60% in 1999, which is still a huge percentage, and 79% of the total work force, of the country.

Although Agricultural labourers are covered under the Minimum Wages Act, the enforcement is not effective. On an average, northern and eastern states have fixed higher wages than southern and western states. However, mere announcement of higher wages is no guarantee of increased real incomes, or any kind of food security, as minimum wages are rarely enforced, even in the Government works, and the labourer has to deal in what is invariably a buyers' market. Orissa is amongst

the five states where real minimum wages has either declined or stagnated in the last ten years. The over all increase in real daily minimum wages for the country is 1.56%. Despite the fairly high rate of growth of GDP, the rural employment rates actually declined. The average number of days worked by males dropped from 331 to 321, while the number of days worked by women went up from 241 to 246, indicating the trend towards feminisation of agriculture with lower rates being paid for women.

Rural wage labour have been badly affected by the increase in food grain prices. More than 60% of the income of the agricultural labourer is spent on food items. Thus increase in food grain prices directly affects the wellbeing of the wage workers. The recent increase in PDS prices, and the targeted PDS has been one of the cruellest jokes on the poor, which is already evidenced in the reports of widespread famine and drought conditions in different states of the country. It was widely hope that the NREGA would prove to be a significant Act in mitigating the hunger and food insecurity of the communities. But, that is not to be. More than 18 months after the Act came into force, there is little to be seen, and distress and poverty in the rural areas continue as before.

## The Public Distribution System

Are we the hungriest country, perhaps the various World Development Reports could enlighten us, but surveys indicate that and more than half the women and children in the country are undernourished. Almost half the women in the age group of 15-49 and three fourths the children are anaemic, almost a fifth of all rural households face the prospects of hunger, and 14% of all households do not get two square meals a day. High production food grains, and huge quantities of buffer stock in the godowns still does not enable access to food to the needy. The inability to buy still affects millions of our population. the public distribution system is supposed to insulate the poor families from the impact of rising prices of essential commodities, and help them maintain minimum nutritional standards.

The steep hike in issue price of PDS commodities, the largest ever hike in fact, has made the PDS an instrument of pushing up prices of food commodities, rather than an instrument of helping the poor. The decreasing off take from the PDS due to this steep hike, has more than anything else has resulted in the huge stock pile in the FCI godowns and provides an illusion of self-sufficiency and abundance. Refusing to see this obvious situation, the Government has taken to exporting wheat and rice at prices far below the issue price for APL families. Infact, rice is being exported at BPL prices, which is half the economic costs of FCI rice. Given the poor identification of BPL and APL families in the country, and the not very secure grounds on which such distinctions have been made, this is a criminal betrayal. Drought, famine and starvation conditions are being reported from many parts of the country, the Supreme Court in a recent writ on a PIL filed by the PUCL has upheld the right to food as a fundamental right The Supreme Court observed that the Central and State governments had the primary responsibility to ensure the food grains over flowing in FCI godowns reached starving people and not wasted. The Court's anxiety was that the poor, destitute, and weaker sections of the society should not suffer from hunger and die of starvation. Mere schemes without implementation were of no use. Orissa is one of the states where compliance has been sought on this.

It is not just happenstance that those few who have food security are the ones who command and control the political economy of the regions today. Thus, this study has centred around food security of the tribal communities, which is still an elusive chimera, and we shall conclude with a brief analysis of the same. This study has not covered all the aspects of tribal livelihood, and culture, nor even all the aspects of food security in the tribal regions. However, it has thrown light on crucial aspects of the socio-economic and socio-political situation of the tribals, which inform the long-term (as also the short term) food security situation of the tribal community.

Taking all the aspects into consideration, the food security situation of the tribal community is alarming to say the least. It is the tribal peoples

who with their resilience and their years of learning are able to survive in the harsh and cynical situation in the Southern districts of Orissa, which comprise a major tribal belt in the state. Till date, the state has attempted to bury its head and ignore the plight of the tribals, except when the situation reaches flash point, when it is forced to take note. The only effort made is to increase development expenditure, sky high in a desperate attempt to assuage ones conscience perhaps. Thus close on the heals of the LTAP for the KBK regions, the DFID Livelihoods project is being planned, and then IFAD is coming in with another massive loan regardless of its dismal experience with its past tribal development project in Kashipur. The macabre dance of grab while you can get it, goes on as the death toll of tribals, police personnel, and other hapless caught in the crossfire marches on. The food security situation in the tribal regions can be summed up in a few words.

- **The Tribal situation**

The tribal situation, needs to be considered taking into account:

**a. The resource situation**

The degraded condition of natural resources, and the paucity of land, combined with the unskilled human resources within the tribal community brings the tribal economy to the brink. The tribal community on their own initiative seek various options but these give little security or long-term sustainability. The tribal communities have walked a tight rope of subsistence for centuries, and one just takes it for granted that they will continue to do so. But with present development trends, there can be little room for such complacency any more, as the onslaught on resources and the appropriation of cultural and living space of the communities continues at an ever growing space;

**b. The political Voice**

The tribal communities have a weak political voice, made worse by the lack of education, which deprives them of any measure of confidence

in countering the hegemony of the upper-class elite who have entrenched themselves in the tribal regions. Despite the provisions for local governance, despite the opportunities they get because of reservations, the participation of tribal communities in decision making is very poor.

- **Government Intervention**

Government intervention has had little positive or constructive impact on the food security situation of the tribal community. Some innovative schemes and programmes have been thought of. But, with imagination running amok at the time of implementation, the innovations during planning are countered by innovations for misappropriation and exploitation. This is a sad state of affairs as much can be done if there would be a real effort on the part of the Government;

- **Voluntary Organisations**

The voluntary organisations in the tribal regions are a disparate lot, with no long term rigour to get something going on the ground. Bound by the compulsions of funding and survival, they have not been able to develop a clear focus in most cases, and their efforts for tribal development are just visible, but the tangible impact on food security is hardly there. In the case of credit, and SHGs voluntary organisations have had a clear impact. But, there seems to be little follow-up so that most of the SHGs created have stagnated. A few voluntary organisations have stuck their necks out and tried to ensure that the interests are brought centre stage, and much more importantly, that the rights of the tribal community are not violated. However, the backlash on these voluntary organisations have effectively subdued a whole range of other groups who were taking up issues of exploitation and social justice. The rhetoric has come more or less full circle from Participatory development to reproductive and child health formulas, to AIDS awareness to now a 'rights based approach'. However, funding priorities dominate, and the 'rights-based approach' which has seen a surfeit of campaigns from the anti-child labour campaigns to the right-to-food to forest and land rights, rights of sex-workers, and so on results in little

beyond bright slogans, attractive paper work. On the ground however, the 'Masquerade' goes on as Ben Okri writes so movingly in 'The Famished Road' and people continue in their weary lives. The financial institutions and the bi-lateral agencies which have also been channelling funds to non-profit groups have a fairly straight forward rhetoric of livelihoods, participation, etc. which gets quite side-stepped in the processes they initiate. The humanitarian funding agencies, which do have a mandate of human rights, and people centred development initiate seemingly radical processes, but, limit these to just the words and formulas, without really trying to see whether there is impact on the ground. The question remains can voluntary organisation really work for people centred development to make a larger impact on the present scheme of things. The answer by and large has been in the negative till date, which makes it very difficult for even those little efforts of a few voluntary organisations, which persist in taking a stand to sustain their work.

- **Non-tribal Power Brokers**

These people continue to have a field day, reaping the maximum benefits out of any major interventions for tribal development. If we step a little outside the study, and look at the impact of the IFAD and the reasons for its failures and the withdrawal of the voluntary organisation which was supposed to look after the Human Resources Development part of the programme, then, one gets a very clear picture of the development nexus in the tribal regions, that ensures that benefits of no programme will go beyond the Block and Panchayat headquarters.

## TINA

The TINA (There is no alternative) syndrome rules the mind set of the Government, and those on board, the globalisation bandwagon. This however is unacceptable. Time and again local communities have shown the way for harmony and prosperity. Traditional communities have in fact proved that theirs is the sustainable alternative, not the present

one of rushing headlong to grab resources to destruction, and then moving on to destroy another ecosystem. Taken to its logical end, the TINA syndrome in reality is a recipe for total destruction, as it is based on the exploitation of the resources till there are no resources left. Local communities on the other hand have to maintain the ecosystem, as they are rooted to their locality, and so have developed several means and knowledge systems of sustainable use. There is a richness and diversity of practices, specially in countries like India, which can teach several lessons to the 'omnivores' as There is also a growing body of knowledge about sustainable agriculture, increasing everyday, through the sharing of farmers going back to less harmful practices of production. There is also a realisation amongst several groups of the importance of small holdings and ecologically sound cultivation techniques to consolidate these small holdings. However, in the tribal regions, farmers do not have record of rights. This enhances their insecurity, and practices like shifting cultivation are increased, which leads to a cycle of depletion, and loss of soil nutrients. A pro-active government can do much to reverse these trends by helping tribal farmers have title deeds on productive land, and then enabling them to take up settled agricultural practices with sustainable cultivation techniques promoted and supported.

However, this is not to be. Even tribal farmers legitimately applying for title deeds over land they have been cultivating for centuries are ignored. In the 1996 agricultural policy, the Government of Orissa accorded industry status to agriculture, recognising its potential to generate employment and eradicate poverty. The policy sought to increase production of commercial crops, including cotton, sugarcane and potato, mechanisation of small farms, and dry land agriculture on a watershed basis were major thrust areas of this policy. However, the food production situation in the state has scarcely improved, whereas, disaster and distress have gone up manifold, with farmers suicide being added to the list of problems that affect farmers.

That this agricultural policy has done very little to alleviate distress of rural farmers is evident in districts like Bolangir and Kalahandi, where

more than 25 thousand hectares have been brought under cotton cultivation. Here, unemployment and loss of livelihoods is so rampant that people have leave their homes in lakhs looking for work elsewhere. In other districts where commercial cropping has been introduced, food stress has gone up manifold. Studies and past experience indicates that commercial cropping does little for enhancing the livelihoods of the local communities. Very often, commercial cropping requires much larger investments, and a scale of operation that very few people in underdeveloped regions can afford. It also involves mechanisation on a large scale, depriving the small, marginal farmer and the land less labourer of supplementary employment as wage labourers. The subsidies that organisations like APICOL would give would benefit the better off, who could once again use it to deny the poorer sections what little benefits they had out of agricultural labour. Such processes have been initiated in almost all places within the state, in a small or big scale with introduction of high yielding varieties of seeds, subsidies for mechanisation, and have caused the alienation of the poorer sections, and minority groups like the tribals more and more. All this would result in decrease in self-employment, and increased casualisation. This is corroborated by macro-level studies, which indicates an over-all decline in employment in agro-industries, accompanied by a considerable increase in capital investment. Clearly there has been a substitution of capital for labour.

It remains to be seen whether the new Agricultural policy (still in draft form) in keeping the WTO agreements would have a better impact. The new policy involves re-organisation on the ATMA Model, tried out in Assam, and in addition, "extension, water conservation and optimum & efficient use of irrigation resources, integrated plant nutrient management, integrated pest management, use of biological resources for enhancing soil health and fertility, use of improved and quality seeds and establishment of seed banks for contingent use, facilities for farmer friendly marketing setup and establishment of commodity exchange as well as market oriented research along with development of State level master plan for agriculture diversification. Farmers will be the central focus of all farming activities and all efforts shall be made to make farming a choice-able vocation".

Along with, the government has also taken up a campaign called the Mo diha Mo Jameen, in which land holdings of small and marginal farmers will be identified and consolidated, and ceiling surplus land not yet in possession of the farmers will be identified and handed over for possession by the rightful owner.

Parallel to these measures are intense efforts to promote industrialisation in the state, with top priority being given for the development of infrastructure for industries, a data bank containing information on possible projects, locations, resources etc. will be created by March 2002 for use of prospective investors, land banks identified throughout the state earmarked for industries and single window clearance system and a dedicated Secretairat. A glance at the different policy documents reveals the priorities and the inclinations of the Government. Large size fonts in the Industrial policy resolution document underline the importance to be given to ***To attract Mega Projects into the State, Special package of incentives may be considered for new Industrial Projects with a capital investment of Rs.300 crores and above on a case to case basis keeping in view the National Policy on Sales Tax related incentives.***

This may be alright in itself, but if one looks at the consequences to the local communities, and the overall costs to the environment, then one wonders at the priorities in the policy formulations of the Government.

On the other hand, there are no alternatives to development based on people's own initiatives, needs, priorities, perceptions, and most importantly learning. When local communities plan and organise and do, they learn very fast what is good, and what is not. If they do not learn and continue to make mistakes, they are annihilated, as their resource base will be quite depleted, or it will turn quite toxic for them. On the other hand, centralised, capital driven planning and implementation, does not have to learn at all, as one destroyed resource base is replaced by another then by another, and so on, as so beautifully explained in Gadgil & Guha's Book "the Ecological History of India". But, then, the alternative of the 'ecosystem people' has pluralism and

diversity and so it is not one alternative, but a whole range of alternatives, to learn from and choose from. This is the alternatives government need to facilitate, not the mono-crops of mines and factories and power projects based on pain and annihilation that is becoming the face of modern Orissa.

## AGRAGAMEE'S PUBLICATIONS

| Sl. No. | Name of the Book | Year of Publication | Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ama Gaon | 1988 | 3 00 |
| 2 | Naba Swajan Kan | 1990 | 5.00 |
| 3 | Agragamee Eka Suphal Rupayan (1st & 2nd) | 1991 | 10 00 |
| 4 | Gitare Gitare | 1992 | 5.00 |
| 5 | Agragamee Parikshya & Paryalochana | 1993 | 20 00 |
| 6 | Sachitra Sansar | 1993 | 15 00 |
| 7 | Chatrutha Adivasi Mahila Samabes | 1994 | 10 00 |
| 8 | Eabi Sansar | 1994 | 10 00 |
| 9 | Pruthibira Piladine | 1994 | 25 00 |
| 10 | Adivasi Anchalare Samastnanka pain sikshya | 1995 | 20 00 |
| 11 | Bikash Bitarka | 1996 | 20 00 |
| 12 | Banabasi pain Banua niti (1) | 1996 | 10 00 |
| 13 | Kaha Dhana Kaha Adhikar | 1996 | 10 00 |
| 14 | Siksnya Bitarka | 1996 | 35 00 |
| 15 | Panchayatiraj Samandhiya Upa anchalika Karmashala | 1996 | 10 00 |
| 16 | Bhabisya sansar | 1996 | 20 00 |
| 17 | Jungal Chithi | 1997 | 50 00 |
| 18 | Ama Jungal | 1998 | 50 00 |
| 19 | Jami Adhigrahan Bill-1998 | 1998 | 5 00 |
| 20 | Sikhyak Mahasamabesa | 1998 | 10.00 |
| 21 | Ama Gaon Kashipur | 1998 | 2 00 |
| 22 | Gaimund gaon | 1998 | 8 00 |
| 23 | Agragamee-Bhul Kete Thik Kete | 1999 | 40.00 |
| 24 | Manachitra Pathan | 1999 | 20 00 |
| 25 | Education for All in Tribal Areas | 1999 | 20 00 |
| 26 | The other Half | 1999 | 40 00 |
| 27 | Agragamee. How wrong. How Right? | 1999 | 50 00 |
| 28 | Overview Activities of Agragamee | 1999 | 50 00 |
| 29 | The Illustrated World | 1999 | 10 00 |
| 30 | Eka Sangharsara Kahani | 2000 | 20 00 |
| 31 | Megha Ghumen Ghadara Ghumu | 2000 | 18 00 |
| 32 | Pada Bhaunri | 2000 | 15.00 |
| 33 | Grama Sasan Nua Sapan | 2002 | 20 00 |
| 34 | Kutumba Panthi | 2002 | 20.00 |
| 35 | Adivasi Anchalare Daridrya O Anagrasarata | 2002 | 15 00 |
| 36 | Ama Gapa Bahi | 2002 | 10 00 |
| 37 | Ama Gita Bahi | 2002 | 10.00 |
| 38 | Kutumba Panthi O Khadya Nirapata | 2003 | 20 00 |
| 39 | Kshyamata Hastantara | 2004 | 10 00 |
| 40 | Ama Panchayat Ama Yojana | 2004 | 20.00 |
| 41 | Kapi Tu Kahnu Aeilu | 2005 | 120 00 |
| 42 | Jhauni Napada Kehi | 2005 | 120.00 |
| 43 | Chronicle of Struggle | 2006 | 75.00 |
| 44 | Governance in Tribal Areas Myths & Realities | 2006 | 30.00 |
| 45 | Jaibika Chasa Pranali | 2006 | 25 00 |
| 46 | Ama Panchyat Ama Yojana | 2006 | 20.00 |
| 47 | Water Right Water Wrong | 2006 | 30.00 |
| 48 | Alternative State Water Policy | 2006 | 20.00 |
| 49 | Samajika Samikshya | 2006 | 30 00 |
| 50 | Community Grain Bank | 2007 | 30.00 |
| 51 | Ama Chasabasa Ama Jungala | 2007 | 50.00 |
| 52 | Jagati Karana Sangramrata Manisha | 2007 | 150.00 |
| 53 | Jala Sampada O Sahirajyabad | 2007 | 40.00 |

*Source: Author, Digitized by PPRACHIN, SOA*

This study was taken up at a time when tribal area conflict and the livelihood crisis were catching national and international headlines. Abuse of police power had resulted in the killing of three tribal people in Rayagada District, reports of starvation deaths were drawing much attention, and endless accusations. This study tries to understand the complex reasons behind the food crisis of the tribal communities, and their coping mechanisms, the role of different players and interests, while also trying to find out what could be the alternatives. The study was presented in a two day workshop which generated much debate. Now, however policy dialogue with the Government is becoming difficult, with growing impatience with life and livelihoods concerns. The issues that this study raised almost six years back are still more relevant, today as impoverishment is growing while the Government notches up higher growth rates and Orissa Government claims the highest FDI nationally. What does this growth mean for the tribals and dalits of this Country and this State? The question is up for debate, we hope this study will sharpen it.

Agragamee a development organization registered under the Societies Act, has been working in the tribal districts of Orissa for over two decades. It has pioneered crucial development interventions including the institution of community grain banks, successful patterns of alternative education for tribal children to help them catch up with mainstream education, entrepreneurship by tribal women's collectives, tribal friendly policies which include facilitating titles on uplands/hill slopes for landless tribal families, a more tribal friendly minor forest produce policy and institutional involvement of village committees in development works. Its action research efforts like the present one aim to inform policy debate, and draw mainstream attention to problems of tribals, and other deprived sections of our society.

**With a foreword by Jean Dreze**

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